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Liv Blavarp (detail)
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FOREWORD

STYLE IS A potent yet elusive feature, at once distinct yet hard to define. It is like a thin membrane, distinguishing forms or beings from the rest of the world. While style is often discussed in contrast to substance, as if they were opposed, the two are actually tightly entwined. Indeed, style may best be seen as the outer contour of the contents within, an epidermis containing internal pressures.

Questions of style repeatedly surface within this issue of *Metalsmith*. The feature on Gilded Age metalsmithing, for example, might be called a tale of two styles. At the turn of the twentieth century, two main stylistic tendencies prevailed: the modern Arts-and-Crafts aesthetic and a retrograde manner lifted from eighteenth-century European courts. Each mode reflected a different clientele with its own aspirations; style was a carrier of social status and conveyed shades of conspicuous wealth.

Cover artist John Rais's oeuvre encompasses sculpture and functional works, from tables to fire screens. Throughout his varied pieces, certain stylistic motifs recur as part of Rais's distinctive vocabulary, including perforated steel and a rounded "bean plate" shape. These formal elements contribute to the engaging visual tension and sensuality that mark the style of his work.

Jeweler Philip Sajet, also featured here, would seem to be a proponent of anti-style. The immense variety of his conflicting designs—at turns aggressive, elegant, rational, random—suggests an eclectic taste and hungry sensibility. But to Sajet, the multifarious forms and materials enlisted in his jewelry are necessarily aligned with a desire to express "the wonder of life, the wonder of creation."

Much has been written on the subject of style, both extolling and decrying its value. For our purposes here, Pablo Picasso's view proves most useful: "God is really only another artist. He invented the giraffe, the elephant and the cat. He has no real style. He just goes on trying other things."

SUZANNE RAMLJAK
EDITOR

The mission of *Metalsmith* magazine is to document, analyze, and promote excellence in jewelry and metalsmithing. In fulfillment of the goal of producing a significant document of the field, editorial content will emphasize contemporary activities and ideas, with supportive content to include relevant historical work and critical issues.

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Published by the Society of North American Goldsmiths

Artists. Designers. Jewelers. Metalsmiths.
www.snagmetalsmith.org

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PRINTER Royle Printing committed to using environmentally friendly materials and methods.

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Metalsmith (ISSN 0270-1146) is published both print and digitally in January, March, June, August, and October by SNAG, 540 Oak Street, Suite A, Eugene, OR 97401, 541-345-5689, www.snagmetalsmith.org.

Membership rates $85/year and up, full membership includes five-issue subscription to *Metalsmith*. Special student rates. Subscription to only *Metalsmith*: $25/year and up.

POSTMASTER/MEMBERS/SUBSCRIBERS/COPIES
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The opinions expressed in *Metalsmith* are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the staff or directors of SNAG or *Metalsmith*. Address unsolicited editorial material to: Suzanne Ramljak, 22 Rockwell Road, Bethel, CT 06801. Materials will be handled with care, but the magazine assumes no responsibility for them.

Metalsmith is indexed in the Art Index and EBSCO Media. Newsstand distribution: COMAG Marketing Group, 155 Village Blvd, Princeton, NJ 08540.

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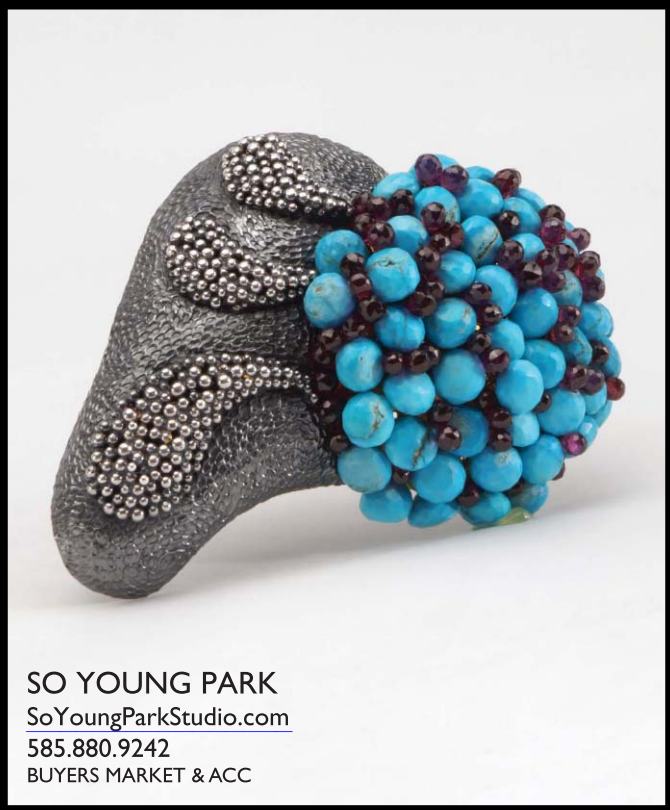

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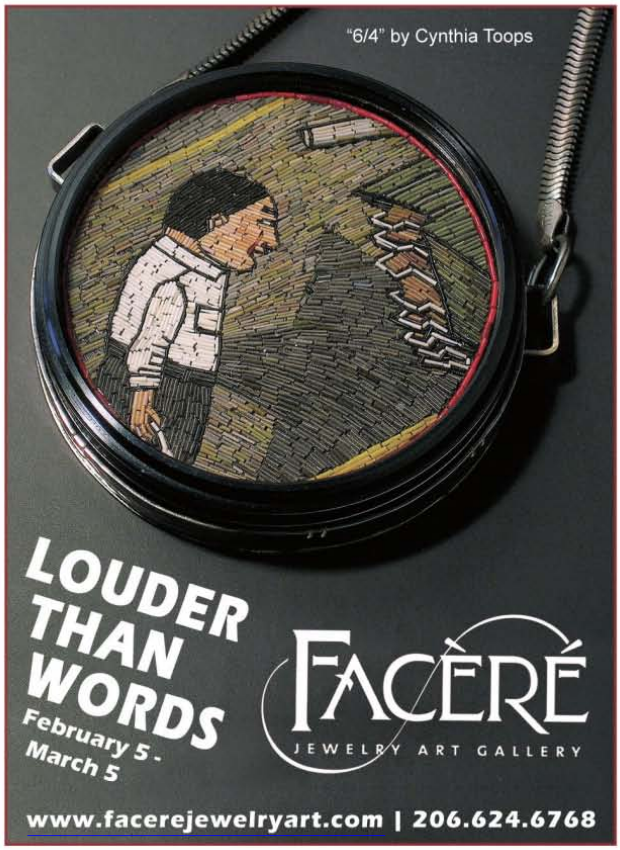
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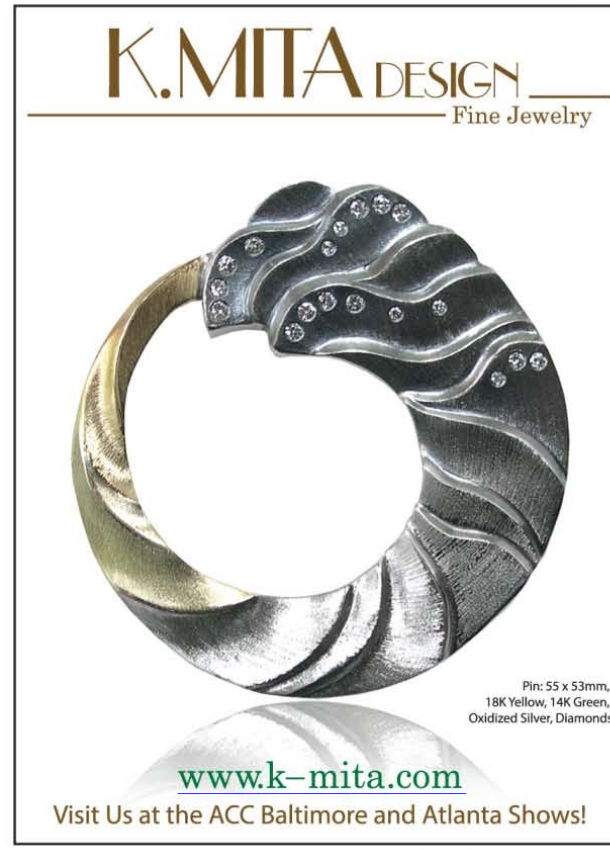
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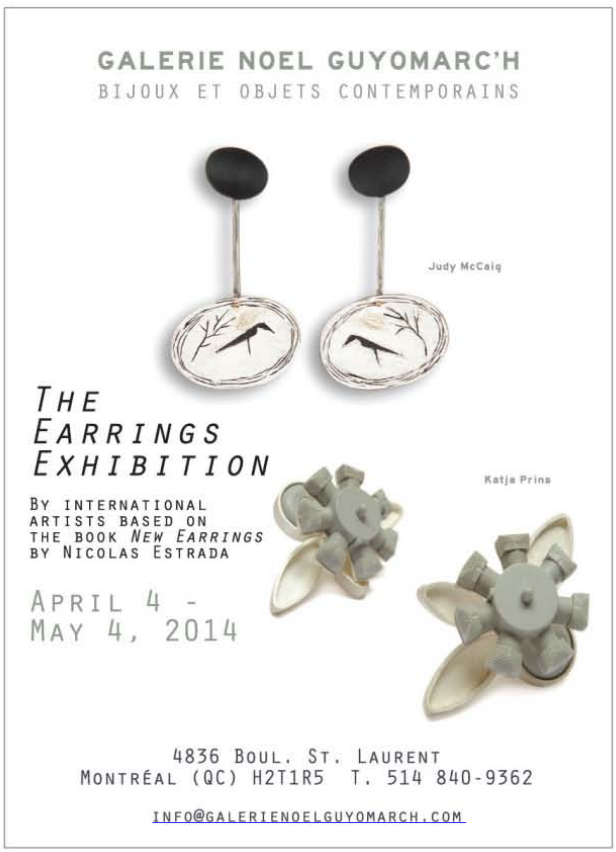
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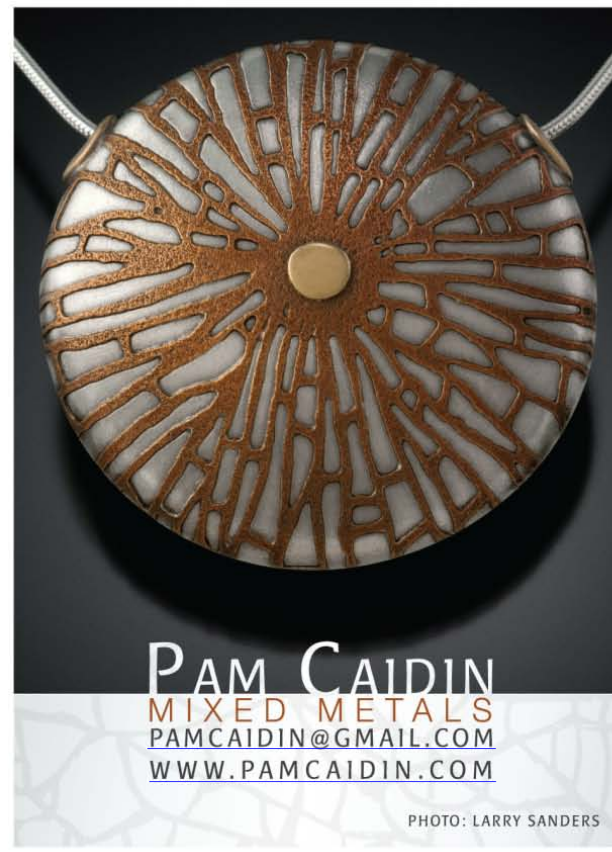
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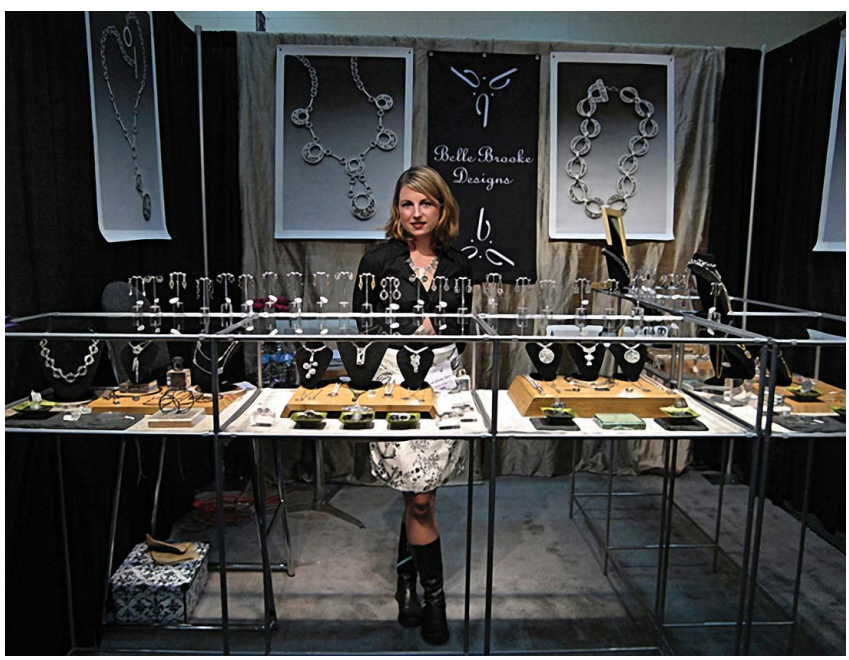
Belle Brooke
Elegant Variation

ANDREA DINOTO

BELLE BROOKE USES the word *azygous* (singular, not of a pair) to describe her signature style. In her case, the term has a particular resonance. What is singular about almost every piece in her various collections—sold under the name Belle Brooke Designs, Inc.—is a design element comprised of different-size tiny tubes whose open ends are flush set, here and there, with precious and semiprecious stones. Worked in either silver or 18k gold, this matrix-like construction is integrated into rings, earrings, pendants, necklaces, and bracelets. The effect resembles both micromosaic work and pavé, except that most of the tiny tubes remain open in a bubbly, graphic pattern of negative space. Geometric or curvilinear frames hold the matrix in place, either open-backed, inviting a play of light, or set against black for sheer drama. Brooke's work—a mix of casting and fabrication—is bold and linear, admittedly inspired by art déco styling, yet thoroughly modern. In many pieces a dominant colored stone is paired with a framed section of matrix, as in her *Hera* necklace, in which triangular gold-and-diamond segments are accented with green chrysoprase cabochons. In another dramatic design, the flat oval top of a massive cast-silver *Medallion* ring is inset with a channel of cognac diamonds encircling a matrix scattered with pink sapphires.



Jeweler Belle Brooke in her booth at the JCK Vancouver show, 2009.

Brooke's work—a mix of casting and fabrication—is bold and linear, admittedly inspired by art déco styling, yet thoroughly modern.

Texas-born, Brooke attended Pitzer College in Claremont, California, where she concentrated on studio art and photography. Jewelry making was a "beads and wire" hobby until, after graduation, she took her first metalworking class at The Crucible, in Berkeley. She sold her work from a booth on Telegraph Avenue in the Berkeley/Oakland area, but, in 2004, she saw the need to refine her work further. Brooke enrolled in the Revere Academy of Jewelry Arts in San Francisco, where she received professional certification. This led to a job as a goldsmith for Studio 311, a store/gallery in Petaluma specializing in wedding rings. In 2005 Brooke moved to Venice Beach, California, where she set up a studio and began to develop her style, selling through a gallery called Sculpture to Wear. Success at this venue encouraged her to "move the studio out of the house, get an assistant, and do trade shows." But her first venture, the San Francisco International Gift Fair, was "a disaster. My booth was terribly set up, no one was interested in the work, my pricing was all wrong, I didn't know what I was doing, and had no helper." It was, she says, "an expensive learning experience." Her next foray, at Philadelphia's Buyers Market of American Craft, was "a better fit for my jewelry" and since then her business has grown apace as her style has evolved. Her production pieces, typically earrings and pendants, retail from $160 to $800; unique designs can range within four or five figures. With the recent launch of a wholesale website, Brooke has been able to abandon costly, hard-to-update paper catalogues and present her seven design collections, including "Oscuro," which frames the matrix in oxidized silver, and "Metropolis," which features polished silver with stones set against blackened silver. The site also provides a showcase for Brooke's unique pieces, mostly complex necklaces that might include multiple pendant elements or, like the *Hera* design, large colored stones. In 2012, her *Oscuro* necklace, made of oxidized silver accented with diamonds and featuring an asymmetrically cut 30-carat blue chalcedony pendant, won the AGTA Spectrum award

Oscuro Maharaja Earrings, 2011
matte oxidized sterling silver, diamonds
2 x 5/8"
PHOTO: GEORGE POST

Oscuro Twist Pendent, 2011
matte oxidized sterling silver, diamonds, handcut blue chalcedony cabochon
1 3/4 x 1 7/8"
PHOTO: GEORGE POST

in both the Business Daywear and Fashion Forward categories.

After many years in California, Brooke now lives and works in Taos, New Mexico, with her partner, a gemstone cutter ("Our businesses are separate; we complement each other"), and their year-old baby Josie, a development that has brought a new degree of balance to her working life. "Having a baby has given me a lot of perspective," she says. "I'm streamlining a little bit, not open to every possibility now." The move to New Mexico was "mostly for personal reasons," but she found there a "wonderful, creative artist community" that includes lots of metalsmiths. Preparing for the GTX Gem & Jewelry Exchange show in Tucson in February, Brooke notes that she will be selling mostly earrings and pendants. "Rings don't see a return," she says. "They take a lot of metal and time and people wear them very hard." For this reason she doesn't do bridal. "People just don't know how to treat their jewelry," she says, noting rings are often brought back for repair in horrendous condition. "Oh my god," she once exclaimed to a client, "did you fix your car with that on?!"

Andrea DiNoto writes on art, craft and design.

Furthermore:
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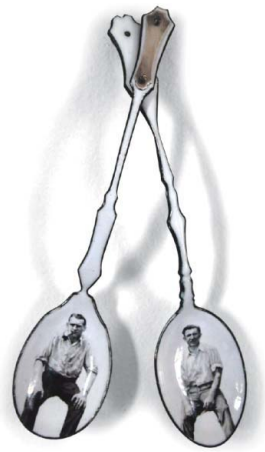
Joe Pillari

TONI GREENBAUM



Persistence of Accomplishments, 2011
handpainted enamel on copper,
sterling silver

HANDSOME AND HIP, twenty-eight-year-old enamelist Joe Pillari disproves expectations. If one were to rely solely on his youth for clues to his aesthetic agenda, one would be astonished. His draftsmanship approaches that of a Renaissance master, while his imagery recalls post–WWII America. Instead of turning to Facebook for models, Joe scours eBay for vintage photographs depicting animals, both bestial and human, along with landscapes with which he will compose haunting tableaus for transfer onto brooches and objects. His technical expertise is mind-boggling; his poignant pictorials touch the heart.

Originally from New Jersey, Pillari entered the University of the Arts in Philadelphia in 2004 to study film, which isn't surprising since his narrative paintings may be read as stills from mid-twentieth-century film noir or early black-and-white television shows. A freshman metals class with Chris Darway, however, revealed an innate talent for handcrafting. Subsequent jewelry coursework with Sharon Church, who Pillari acknowledges for introducing him to "the conceptual side of jewelry," plus enameling with Lola Brooks, galvanized his process.

Despite his tender age, Pillari is an old-school artist-craftsman. In an era of rapid communication and abbreviated social networking, he gravitates toward the leisurely mien of the past. Nonetheless, he exploits current technology, along with traditional processes. Working meticulously, without shortcuts or assistance, he employs neither gimmicks nor trendy techniques.

View of Joe Pillari's Philadelphia studio.

Pillari recently bought a row house built in the late nineteenth century in south Philly, where he both lives and, except for kiln firings performed at University of the Arts, creates his poetic works. The neighborhood, a mix of marginalized poor and intrepid artists, is also changing, much like the Bushwick section of Brooklyn or San Francisco's Mission District. Pillari is in the process of lovingly restoring the interior of the house to its original charm. He has filled it with old furniture, musical instruments, and bric-à-brac that hint at a sensitive young man with an empathetic response to human disengagement. His second-floor workspace, reached via a creaky wooden staircase, is chock full of used books, memorabilia, detritus, and cast-offs from nature. Here he is planning eventually to include a full-scale metalsmithing studio, but for now it is where he paints his achingly beautiful pictures that combine the lives of disparate individuals who have never met but appear to have shared experiences.

His technical expertise is mind-boggling; his poignant pictorials touch the heart.

Pillari has always been interested in the human body and condition. The process of collage allows him to bring together seemingly unrelated aspects of both. Inspired by figures in books from the "Fairburn System of Visual Reference," which are used mostly for commercial art, he first began his practice by cutting up advertising images printed from woodcuts with an X-Acto knife and then recombining them. This led to the use of actual photographs, but when he found the heavy photo paper too difficult to cut with the precision required, he resorted to a computer-enhanced solution.

After Pillari chooses four or five pictures to assemble, he scans them, extrapolating the desired sections, altering those he wishes, and ultimately creating a finished composition in Photoshop. He manipulates the brooch's silhouette in Adobe Illustrator and then copies the scene onto a copper surface that has been kiln-fired, after being covered with sifted white enamel. The task of painting the background and figures with miniscule brushes dipped in black oil-based China paint is dizzyingly labor-intensive. After the painting is completed, the piece is fired again and mounted within a silver frame as a brooch, although some pieces, fitted with posts, remain free of such constraint. The "souvenir spoons," an equally evocative format, presented in pairs, are bolted together.

Photorealism and equivocal subject matter draw the viewer into a mysterious

Joe Pillari in his studio.

world where life and death hang in the balance, and people are often alienated, both from one another and their immediate surroundings. One tableau is reminiscent of the gripping rowboat scene from the 1951 film, *A Place in the Sun,* in which Montgomery Clift and Shelley Winters reach a tragic climax in their strained relationship. All of Pillari's works are packed with modern, existential pathos but activated through a basically classic methodology. He states: "I am driven to portray man in a post humanist world. . . as a diffident being inferior to the experience of life." He further describes his subject as "the vulnerable human . . . characterized only by his situation." Pillari makes things that express the challenging predicament of being alive, each piece striving to "honor" ordinary people, while inviting the viewer to bring his/her particular angst to the story.

Joe Pillari is a maverick, refreshingly different, at a time when most twenty-somethings seem woefully uniform. One can't help but admire this reserved but articulate artist who has found a way to signify the nostalgia that links all of humankind, past and present, unsentimentally but with sympathy.

Toni Greenbaum is a Brooklyn-based art historian specializing in twentieth- and twenty-first-century jewelry and metalwork.

Source photos and enamel painting in progress on Pillari's workbench.

Beachside Humors, 2011
handpainted enamel on copper, sterling silver

Material Complexity

BY MICHAEL DALE BERNARD

THE WORKS FEATURED here are about materials, but not that alone. They move beyond exploration and elementary substitution and into material complexity—a saturation of ingredients infused with semantic potential. A gentle dismissal of boundaries is present, but this is no irreverent snub of the past or effort to redirect the future in a subversive manner. There is still an obvious embrace of refinement and craft, leading me to believe that there is far more curiosity here than rebellion.

These makers wholly accept the malleability of adornment on a fundamental level. Instructors, mentors, and innovators have forged the potential for such a straightforward attitude. The artists are not taking material choices for granted, but they are certainly confident in their complete freedom of choice. With this constant established in their creative process, the potential for a truly personal vernacular of materials through combination and connotation expands. The creative endeavor then shifts toward capturing more complex and emotional subjects of humanity through material choices as opposed to symbolic references of material worth.

When asked to concisely explain the depth and diversity of materials found in their works, the artists unanimously provided responses devoid of predictable value-based platitudes. Instead, they are relying on models of interpretation, familiarity, and memory to define their artistic intentions. They seem actually interested in how these materials relate to the human condition, rather than how they contrast with luxury. They are also seeking to capture and evoke something with tactile substances that they are unable to fully articulate with words. Impermanence, potential, location, and connectivity have become critically interwoven into their meta-concepts of the body and its adornment. Collectively, these richly diverse physical and conceptual elements result in distinct instances of material complexity.

Michael Dale Bernard is an artist and educator who lives in Milwaukee.

Katja Toporski
Eulogia 2 (necklace), 2013
steel, linen, myrrh oil, concrete, gelatin, charcoal powder, photopolymer, indigo
4 ¾ x 13 ¾ x 1 ¼"

Amy Tavern
Necklace No. 6, from "Collected Memories: 1974 to Present" series, 2011
handbag leather, cotton cord, aluminum beads, acrylic, cardboard mailing envelope, thread
52 x 4 x 1"
PHOTO: HANK DREW

Nikki Couppee
Shell Earrings, 2012
brass, carved Plexiglas, faux pearls, seashells, fine silver, sterling silver
5 x 1 ½ x 1"

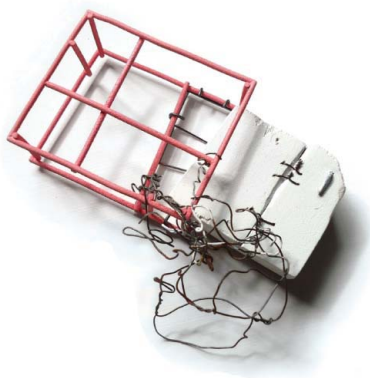
Katie Poterala
Carlotta (statement necklace), 2013
copper, concrete, lab-grown ruby, chemical patina, gold-plated brass chain, gold powder coat
11 x 8 ½ x ¼"

Laura Wood
Necklace Chain, 2013
sterling silver, brass, rough pink opal, orange chalcedony, prehnite, handmade paper, repurposed jewelry, powder coat
6 x 5 ½ x ¼"

Kat Cole
405 Summit (brooch), 2012
steel, brass, enamel, dirt, sea glass, plastic, roofing shingle
4 x 5 x 3"

Rachel Timmins
Companion, One (necklace), 2013
Spandex, flax seeds, thread, rubber, 3D printed nylon, spray paint, brass rod, thread
25 x 8 ½ x 1 ½"

Laritza Garcia
Primary (necklace), 2012
copper, silver, garnets, fresh water pearls, black onyx, steel, steel cable, transparent and opaque powder coat
16 x 5 ½ x ½"
PHOTO: TARA LOCKLEAR



Lauren Markley
Caged (brooch), 2012
copper, reclaimed wood, spray paint, sterling silver, iron wire, rust, gel medium
4 x 3 ¼ x 2"

Tara Locklear
Rubyonia Encrusted Chain (brooch), 2012
concrete, leather, skateboard, tattoo pigment, wenge hardwood, sterling silver, steel, cubic zirconia, powder coated brass ball chain
17 x 3 ½ x ¾"

Philip Sajet
Surreal Beauty

BY ANDREA DINOTO

Shard Ring, 2008
glass, niello on silver
2 ¼ x 1 1⁄16 x ¾"

Boulettes (necklace), 2009
iron, gold
diameter approx. 8"
COLLECTION OF THE ROTASA TRUST

Le Rock (necklace), 2009
smoky quartz, mother of pearl,
water buffalo horn
diameter approx. 9 ½"

Le Mariage (necklace), 2009
pearls, gold, tourmaline, beach pebbles
diameter approx. 6 ⅛"

Broken Blood (necklace), 2010
glass, gold
diameter approx. 5 ½"

The poetic is the opposite of the expected; it is spontaneous—a crucial criterion for the surrealist notion of the marvelous, that which unexpectedly arouses wonder when we chance upon it.[1]

IT'S NOT THAT Philip Sajet aims for beauty. In fact aesthetic perfection is hardly a predictable outcome, given the Dutch jeweler's penchant for rough edges and raw materials—glass shards, animal horn, clam shells, and rusted metal, not to mention beach pebbles and faux diamonds. Yet many of his strangely compelling creations—boldly scaled and often vibrantly colored—appear as wondrous, shocking, and surreal, qualities inherent in a kind of subversive beauty that provokes and delights.

Although Sajet produces jewelry in what appears to be a hugger-mugger of conflicting styles—aggressive, sensual, humorous, even elegant—his body of work is unified by a respect for traditional jewelry forms, notably the necklace of linked elements designed, he says, "to be very near to the throat." As he explains, "It has to do with protection, standing. It's very simple. A piece has to touch the skin, so the stakes are very high." That a wearer allows herself to be touched on the skin is "an achievement," he says. "There the marriage between owner and piece is total." Sajet, then, is engaged in a grand seduction—of the body, surely, but the eye and mind as well—in which his jewelry functions as an invitation to intimacy both physically and conceptually, in some cases as a dare to the wearer.

Sajet's eclectic approach results in immensely varying designs: *Le Rock* (2009), a classically composed necklace of smoky quartz nuggets, mother-of-pearl slabs, and segments of water-buffalo horn, suggests a power-invoking tribal object, while *Le Mariage* (2009), a triple-strand collar of pearls, gold, tourmaline chunks, and beach pebbles, impresses as a playful take on conventional costume jewelry. Then there is *Broken Blood* (2010), a necklace comprised entirely of nine lethal-looking, walnut-sized red glass shards linked in gold. Does the title imply the blood of the wearer? "No! Definitely not!" insists Sajet. "I have a high respect for blood. I think it should stay where it belongs." The glass itself comes from a factory in Saint-Étienne, France, that produces large architectural tiles in different colors. "I buy one, shatter it with a hammer, and wash it under water, bouncing the shards up and down in my cupped hands, so as to eliminate the sharpest edges," he explains, adding, "after some time they become harmless." He calls the provocative title "a form of theatrical exaggeration. How can a fluid break? But it makes sense . . . it evokes images, tragic images . . . of something which has happened, which should not have happened . . . a form of complaint against injustices." Despite the maker's conceptualizing, the necklace more persuasively suggests a surreal dream—an image dredged from the unconscious. In that sense it resembles another fantastical design from 2009, seven lovely, buff-colored goose eggs linked with pearls to form a soft, fragile collar whose ovoid wholeness depends entirely on the wearer's caution.

The incomparable *Boulettes* (2009) is more installation art

Rubies on the Soles of My Shoes (necklace), 2009
rubber, gold, rubies
diameter 8 ½"

than necklace, comprised of ten antique iron cannon balls (each about 2 1/2 to 3 inches in diameter), which Sajet discovered in the attic of a house he was living in in France. "I saw it as a treasure," he says of the trove, noting the etymology of the French word *boulle* (ball), which became "bullet" in English. By joining the rough and crusty *boulettes* with gold links and a clasp made from a halved cannon ball he artfully de-weaponized them, transformed them into "beads," and arranged them in the context of fine jewelry so that the piece acquires beauty by implication. He worked the same alchemy, but whimsically so, with *Rubies on the Soles of My Shoes* (2009), a necklace of hard-rubber heels from women's flats inlaid with tiny rubies, a concept inspired, says Sajet, by a Paul Simon song ("Diamonds on the Soles of My Shoes"). Using ten of the tongue-shaped heels, linked in gold and joined with an exquisite gold ball clasp, he produced a cartoonish flowerlike circlet, reminiscent of anime design, in which a banal manufactured product aspires to beauty via symmetry and embellishment.

Invariably, Sajet's response to a material's symbolic potential is never at the expense of its aesthetic value, as in the case of rust. He has used rusted bottle caps and jewelry findings (jump rings from a found collection) as elements in pendant earrings (hung with slender iron nails), necklaces (together with crystal nuggets, faceted stones, and enamels), and rings, mounted in gold and set with accent diamonds. "Rust is the symbol of decay or of transience," he says, "it's fragile, at the same time it's from iron, which is strong." While Sajet respects the ambiguity of rust, he is equally "fond of this color combination of bright yellow and dark light consuming brown." Sajet's fascination with and openness to all materials extends as well to colored stones but especially to diamonds, real but mostly faux. His *Cullinan 2 Replica* (2007), named after a legendary South African diamond, the largest ever found, is a sparkling faux gem, set in an open-back gold mounting. It provides the glittering centerpiece for a necklace of red glass shards and white quartz nuggets, which, though comparatively valueless, suggest uncut diamonds. Sajet loves the prismatic quality of diamonds—"the idea of an object breaking light"—and the fact that as a "dense closed substance" a diamond is

Invariably, Sajet's response to a material's symbolic potential is never at the expense of its aesthetic value.

Rust (earrings), 2008
iron, gold
3 x 1 ¼ x ⅛"

Red House (ring), 2005
glass, 18k gold, ebony, ivory
2 ⅛ x 1 x 1"

By introducing this element of chance into his designs, he achieved "enormous freedom to be free of taste."

"completely transparent." When he first started using replica diamonds, he would order ten or more "at random," telling the dealer to "just send me a couple." He found this "very exciting as I didn't know what I would get, nor the names." He did this, he says, "in order to avoid trying to create beautiful rings." By introducing this element of chance into his designs—he initially produced about fifty such rings—he achieved, he says, "enormous freedom to be free of taste." But not free of beauty, as the results attest.

Sajet's love of color led him to enameling, a technique in which he is skilled and with which he has produced bright, symmetrical necklaces of utter refinement, as well as playfulness. In one example, a circle of nesting green laurel leaves surrounds the wearer's throat—but with a halo of projecting, touch-me-not gold stems. In another, brilliant blue-on-gold geometric elements form a delicate retro-like bracelet, and in yet another, flattened cartoonish *saucisson* (sausage) links appear to suggest we not take jewelry all that seriously.

Sajet is also a master of niello, the black-metal technique that yields a slightly roughened sooty surface. He uses it to great effect for necklace elements—sometimes raw, pierced irregular forms—but also for dramatic rings in which high-projecting glass or crystal shards are mounted on a sturdy niello-on-silver washer-shaped base. Occasionally, rather than a raw shard, he uses a faceted stone or an open metal form constructed to resemble a table-cut diamond, some of these bristling like cacti, with thorny gold rods. In every case, the effect is once again of surreal drama, with the stone sitting high on its circular mounting—a thing that shouldn't be able to exist, but does. Several of Sajet's designs for high rings incorporate an architectural element, a small open-sided peak-roofed house, in the manner of Renaissance-era Jewish wedding rings. (Although admittedly not a particularly religious person, Sajet, who is Jewish, admits to playing "with the values of my culture.")

Born in Amsterdam in 1953, Sajet attended the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam and studied privately in 1981 with the noted goldsmith Francesco Pavan in Padova, Italy. Sajet was impressed with "the power, the strength, the sizes" of Pavan's work—one memorable piece contained 200 grams of gold. "His work is audacious," says Sajet, "and I am happy to have seen that at such an early moment in my learning." Audacity seems to have come naturally to Sajet, who, in his earliest forays into metalwork fancied himself "a small-time desperado" who wanted to become a counterfeiter of coins. He now lives in Hanau, Germany, where his wife, the jeweler Beate Klockman, teaches at the Staatliche Zeichenakademie. The family moved there recently, after a sojourn of "exactly 50 months," as he puts it, in France which he had chosen "for the quiet" and to concentrate on his work removed from the distractions of exhibitions and

Cullinan 2 Replica (necklace), 2007
rock crystal, gold, glass
diameter 7 ⅞"

Laurel (necklace), 1990
enamel, silver, gold
length 10"

Sausage (necklace), 1996
enamel, silver, gold
diameter 7 ½"

such. During this period, he reports that his jewelry became "bolder, cruder . . . a little like the rugged mountains and the at times 100-mile-an-hour winds."

In 1986, Sajet was invited to mount his first solo show as a jeweler by Galerie Louise Smit in Amsterdam, for which he made twenty-five pieces, each one different from the next, an approach, he says, "considered as a negative" at that time. Instead of caving to a trend, Sajet determined to make this "handicap" a strength, and the resultant work, over three decades, demonstrates how a singular sensibility can prevail despite an artist's chosen eclecticism. Sajet's multiform approach is dramatically demonstrated in two widely dissimilar pieces: *Pyche* (2012), a group of seven niello butterfly rings[2], the insect forms touched with gold and precious stones poised on blue enamel bands; and *Clams* (2011), a monumental pendant neckpiece made from two vertical rows of five large, polished clam shells that hang side by side from a gold ring. The latter piece—especially as photographed by Beate Klockman on Sajet's workshop assistant, Fanny—might be viewed as a meditation on Botticelli's *Birth of Venus*, the iconic Renaissance painting in which the goddess appears naked, a paragon of beauty on a scallop shell. Deviating from his usual circle-necklace form, Sajet here presents the shells nestling between the wearer's breasts, from throat to navel, evocative variously of the sea, sexual love, and the voluptuous configurations to be found in female anatomy.

With astonishing ease, Sajet turns his hand from, say, the provocative sensuality of the clam neckpiece to the soulfulness of butterflies; from the rationality of geometric forms (cubes and disks) to the random configuration of shards; from the moody tones and textures of niello and rust to the vibrant tones of enamel and the brilliance of diamonds. To Sajet, his pieces are all of a kind, simply diverse expressions of "the wonder of life, the wonder of creation." One's aim as an artist, he believes, is "not to pay homage to a tree or flowers, but to be like a tree, to grow in innocence without opinion, and just be." An overview of his work in all its quirky multiformity suggests nothing less than an existential frolic, an ode to the joys of any and all materials, and an immersion in varieties of aesthetic experience born of a beautiful, if unpredictable, mind.

Andrea DiNoto writes on art, craft and design.

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1. Mary Ann Caws, ed. *Surrealism* (London and New York: Phaidon, 2004).
2. Sajet made an eighth ring at the request of his daughter Nina, for whom he has made a piece of jewelry for each of her twenty-four birthdays. In 2011, an exhibition of her twenty-three birthday jewels—including ice-cream-cone earrings and a necklace of beach pebbles—was held at the CODA Museum, Apeldoorn, the Netherlands, as part of a Philip Sajet retrospective. Psyche, the goddess renowned for her beauty and the beloved of the god Eros, is often depicted in ancient art with butterfly wings.

All photos courtesy of Philip Sajet and Ornamentum Gallery.

Furthermore:

www.phillipsajet.com

Marjan Unger. *Sajet Jewelry* (Amsterdam: Galerie Marzee, 2011).

To Sajet, his pieces are all of a kind, simply diverse expressions of "the wonder of life, the wonder of creation."

Clams (necklace) 2011
18k gold, clam shells
18 x 7 x 1"

Psyche (7 rings), 2012
niello, enamel
each 1 ¾ x 1 ⅜ x 1"

Beauty, Money, Power
Gilded Age Metalsmithing in America

BY ULYSSES GRANT DIETZ

Designed by Paulding Farnham for
Tiffany & Co., Newark
Exhibition Coffee Set, 1901
silver, gemstones, enamel
9 ⅜ x 7 ¼ x 3 ½" (coffee pot)

Theodore B. Starr, New York
Brooch, 1895–1905
platinum, gold, diamonds
4 ¾ x 1 ¾"

Finely crafted objects of personal and household adornment became physical symbols of the financial clout and social aspirations of their owners.

THE GILDED AGE (1865–1915) was an era of explosive wealth accumulation in the United States, fueled by industrialization in the aftermath of the Civil War (1860–65). While it is traditionally seen as the historical moment at which mechanized factory production crushed the soul of the artisan, the Gilded Age was simultaneously a period of extraordinary craftsmanship in every medium, a time of design and craft skills unparalleled previously in American history.

Finely crafted objects of personal and household adornment became physical symbols of the financial clout and social aspirations of their owners. In a nation devoid of bloodline-based aristocracy, the newly rich of the industrial age developed a material hierarchy that made it clear who was on top of the consumer food chain. They wanted goods that reflected status, and American manufacturers had the highly skilled labor to accommodate their demands. Nowhere was the primacy of great craftsmanship more evident than in the world of precious metalsmithing. Both the silver and jewelry industries exploded during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Although one can never discount the consistent lure of European makers for rich Americans, the appeal of beautifully made American goods was a powerful selling point, and during the Gilded Age, the concept of a brand name took hold in the United States. Often, however, the power of the "name" obscures the identities of the individual craftspeople behind it.

A comparison of two tours-de-force of precious metalsmithing from the turn of the twentieth century highlights the main aesthetic thrusts of the period. A platinum and gold brooch encrusted with South African diamonds was made by the New York jewelry firm of Theodore B. Starr for Julia Shanley, the wife of a Newark industrialist. Stylistically it represents a self-conscious rejection of "modern" design in favor of a heavily historicized aesthetic echoing the eighteenth-century court jewelry of Europe. This "anti-modern" style was favored by the very tip of the economic pyramid in America at the end of the nineteenth century, carrying with it romantic fantasies of Marie Antoinette and courtly elegance. The stylized dagger or short sword evokes the sidearms worn by courtiers and aristocrats throughout Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The bowknot that flutters around the shaft recalls both the ornamental ribbons fashionable on clothing in these periods, and also the ubiquitous bow-shaped jewels of the earlier era.

The craftsmanship and technology of this piece, however, are entirely modern. By the end of the 1890s, platinum had begun to replace silver fused with gold as the metal of choice for displaying diamonds. The development of the oxyacetylene torch in the late 1890s allowed very hard platinum to be worked with enough precision to produce what were known as *ajouré* settings[1] Platinum was fused to a gold backing of equal thickness, and the metal armature was then riddled with hand-cut openings over which each stone was set. While open settings for gemstones had been used by the 1850s, they had not been possible in platinum until the new technology was introduced.

Platinum itself was only accepted as a desirable precious metal, durable and lustrous, in the early twentieth century. Although the astonishing level of metalsmithing in the Shanley brooch—all of it done by anonymous craftsmen—contributed to the jewel's status, the glittering diamonds took center stage.

A very different contemporaneous jewel demonstrates another agenda. A large corsage ornament, formed as an articulated cluster of morning glory blossoms, was produced at the turn of the twentieth century by Marcus & Co., another well-known jewelry store in New York City. This time the client was Ada Rehan, a celebrated stage actress.[2] Having somewhat different social aspirations than an industrialist's wife, Rehan chose art over materials. As with the Shanley brooch, however, the craftspeople who produced this and similar Marcus pieces are unknown, although one was said to have studied enameling in René Lalique's Paris atelier.[3]

The Rehan brooch exhibits spectacular metalsmithing. A remarkable lattice-work of 18k gold makes up the skeleton of each blossom and leaf—which are jointed to allow movement. Rather than diamonds, plique-à-jour covers the frame. This type of enameling seems to have reemerged in Europe (Russia, Norway, France) by the late 1880s and shortly thereafter in the United States.[4] With roots in the Middle Ages, this technically difficult process requires the enamelist to use either a temporary backing when applying the enamel in an openwork frame or a slightly liquefied enamel powder mixed with adhesive, relying on capillary action to hold the enamel in place until air-hardened enough to fire. The more complex the color scheme and desired shading, the more applications and firings required.

The Rehan brooch is about as complicated as shaded plique-à-jour gets, its three blossoms, two buds, and six leaves all requiring different colors and shading. The skill needed for both metalwork and enameling would have been recognized by those who understood craft and were not impressed by precious stones. Moreover, the Rehan brooch is self-consciously a work of art in a way the Shanley brooch is not. Its composition and iconography suggests that it was a metaphor for both the Christian Holy Trinity and the enduring qualities of Faith (purple), Hope (blue), and Love (red). The turned-under blue blossom further evokes the idea of death with the hope of Resurrection, a concept that may have appealed to the Irish-born Rehan as well as to her circle of intellectual friends and admirers.

Two examples of Arts-and-Crafts style jewelry offer a similar counterpoint in terms of Gilded-Age precious metalsmithing. While both of these pieces were produced in small-scale, low-production "ateliers," they relied just as fully on "ghost" craftspeople obscured by the powerful brand name of the retailer.

F. Walter Lawrence is virtually unknown to all but the most obsessive jewelry scholars today. He had deep roots in the jewelry industry of Newark, New Jersey, successful enough to have exhibited his work both in Gustav Stickley's 1903 Arts and Crafts Exhibition in Syracuse, New York, as well as at the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in Saint Louis.[5] He was a

Marcus & Co., New York
Brooch/pendant, 1895–1905
gold, enamel
4 x 3"

F. Walter Lawrence, New York
Presentation Necklace, 1909
gold, gemstones, opal
18 x 1"

benchworker who rose up the entrepreneurial ladder to operate an upstairs salon on Fifth Avenue in New York. Although he died in 1929, his firm survived, selling custom-designed silver and jewelry to carriage-trade clientele into the 1940s.

Lawrence seems to have been an everyman's Louis Comfort Tiffany, who produced unique (or limited production) jewels for an affluent customer base more interested in art than in flash. The surviving examples of his work are mostly in Art Nouveau or Arts and Crafts styles of the early 1900s, and like Tiffany, he recognized the aesthetic potential of exotic colored stones. A necklace he produced in 1909 can be fully understood because of a surviving blueprint that was folded and tucked into the back of the original fitted case. Thirty different faceted colored stones in collet settings are flanked by the leaves and buds of the hop vine—birth plant for the month of October. A detachable pendant at the bottom of the necklace holds a larger opal—birthstone for the same month—while the notation "1879 / October 22nd / 1909" indicates that the necklace was made to commemorate a thirtieth birthday. The hop-vine segments appear to have been die-stamped, and there are two slightly different models that make up the thirty segments, suggesting that two separate dies were cut and used to create a more naturalistic rhythm in the flow of the segments. Handcraft was clearly an important aspect of his necklace, as well as its one-off nature. The cost of the stones was secondary to their coloristic interest and intellectual value.

The other Arts and Crafts example is a brooch/pendant from Tiffany & Co. Unlike Lawrence's benchworkers, its maker is known by name: Meta Overbeck, who managed the small jewelry atelier that had been established in 1907 on the sixth floor of Tiffany & Co., when Louis Comfort Tiffany sold the jewelry and enamel businesses.[6] This art-jewelry production studio was physically and ideologically separate from the world of precious stones downstairs in the Fifth Avenue store. It was described as the "department of original—that is to say individual and unduplicated—enamels and jewels designed by Mr. Louis C. Tiffany."[7]

This splendid oval brooch has a detachable pendant and two large black opals, stones that were largely ignored by the downstairs jewelry shop. Black opals had been discovered on Lightning Ridge in New South Wales, Australia, in the 1880s or 1890s. By the end of the century they were fashionable because of their color, but not especially valuable. Realistically modeled, enameled grape vines and leaves, in autumn colors in harmony with the intense blue and purple of the opals, embrace the oval stones. The work on the back is as fine as that on the face of the jewel .

The working relationship between Overbeck and Tiffany is not entirely known, but presumably Tiffany made general sketches of what he had in mind, and Overbeck produced working drawings for his approval. Overbeck did both metalsmithing and enameling. Louis Tiffany was not a symbolist, like Rene Lalique, but a naturalist and colorist. His designs are not usually imbued with meaning other than

Functional hollowware, like silver and gold jewelry, existed at all levels of price and craftsmanship during America's Gilded Age.

Designed by Louis Comfort Tiffany
for Tiffany & Co., New York
Made by Meta Overbeck
Brooch/pendant, 1915-1918
gold, opals, enamel
2 ¾ x 1 ¾"

the essential beauty of the natural forms and colors. In this way he is better aligned with the ideals of Arts and Crafts than Art Nouveau, which by the 1910s was already passé. Unquestionably, the Tiffany & Co. name on the back of this brooch would have lent prestige to its owner, but as with the Lawrence necklace and the Marcus corsage ornament, it was the evident handcrafting—the clear association with art—that gave the jewel its cultural impact. The buyers of such jewels wanted them to be remarked upon, and the superb craftsmanship was a crucial part of that effect.

Functional hollowware, like silver and gold jewelry, existed at all levels of price and craftsmanship during America's Gilded Age. While large-scale manufacturing produced vast quantities of cheap sterling silver for middle-class consumers, there remained a great deal of high-quality handcrafting, often made in the same factories. Self-styled Arts and Crafts workshops (Horace Potter, the Kalo Shops, Elizabeth Copeland) demonstrated high levels of skill. Ironically, Arts and Crafts–style silver consciously aimed at a "home-made" look, with deliberate hammer marks and simplified design details.

Two coffee sets from the same period shed light on both the status of craftsmanship and the melancholy fact of "ghost artists" in the world of Gilded Age metalsmiths. In 1897, William M. Kingsland, a New York City banker, purchased a three-piece coffee set in 18k gold from Tiffany & Co. for his wife Mary, to commemorate their golden wedding anniversary on September 16. Designed by John T. Curran, the set had been made in 1895. According to Curran's notations dated April 1896 on the drawings in the Tiffany archives, the set was not to be duplicated. Therefore, unless Kingsland ordered it two years in advance, it was in Tiffany's stock, possibly on display at their Union Square store, when he purchased it. Customized with a touching inscription, as well as the owner's monogram, its final retail price was $1,500.[8]

The other coffee set, made a few years later, in 1901 in a "Viking" style, was designed by Paulding Farnham for Tiffany's display in the Pan American Exposition in Buffalo, New York. Crafted in silver, it was entirely covered in seething, tattoo-like decoration and further encrusted with colored enamels and studded with semiprecious faceted gemstones. The Viking set was also exhibited at the Turin Exhibition of 1902 and the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in Saint Louis in 1904, where it was purchased. Although two design drawings are now in the Newark Museum collection, no costing records survive to indicate its retail price.[9]

Stylistically, these pieces are very different from each other, but both could only have been designed in the 1890s. The rococo/classical mixture of the gold set is perfectly aligned with upper-class Euro-American taste of the time. The more ethnic Arts and Crafts approach of the Viking set may look Victorian to modern eyes, but it echos aspects of northern European Art Nouveau. The use of solid gold for the Kingsland service is an American phenomenon that seems to have flourished from the late 1890s to World War I. Gold appears to have rarely been used for functional objects (nonjewelry) in any late nineteenth-century modernist aesthetic. America's

richest consumers as a group appear to have shied away from such designs after 1890, apparently preferring styles associated with the European aristocracy whose wealth and power ironically had been eclipsed by America's since the onset of the Gilded Age.[10]

Neither Kingsland nor the buyer of the Viking set ever knew the name of the designer of their luxurious objects. Although both Curran and Farnham were important designers at Tiffany's, the company name always subsumed that of its employees. Even more hidden from view than the designers' artistic role was the skill of the men who made the objects. For the gold set, it took the labor of six men, working collectively for over 500 hours between June and September of 1895, to produce the three pieces. Known today only by their surnames—Ettinger, Bohnert, Jones, Tallichet, Miller, and Weber—they earned between twenty-eight and forty-two cents per hour. Weber seems to have been the most highly paid silversmith, suggesting that he was a chaser and did the amazingly fine floral repoussé work on each piece.[11] But even if the Tiffany name garnered the glory, the superb craftsmanship gave these two coffee services palpable cultural power, both for the owners and for anyone who saw them on display in their owner's mansions.

By the turn of the twentieth century, Gorham Manufacturing Company, the largest silver manufacturer in the world, had established a studio within the larger factory complex to make a line of art silver developed by the company's chief designer, English-born William Christmas Codman. The new line, named Martelé (hammered), a French term that underscored the handcrafting of its products, was introduced at the 1900 Exposition Universelle in Paris.[12]

What the Arts and Crafts movement, both in Europe and in the United States, accomplished was the celebration of the hand of the artisan.

The Martelé line represents the most sophisticated expression of Art Nouveau in American Gilded Age metalsmithing, filtered through the ideals of the English Arts and Crafts movement. It was all about the prestige of handcraft and modern design, exemplified by a standing cup (large enough to use as a punch bowl), made in 1905. The cup features three swirling mermaids with poppies behind their ears in symbolist fashion. The surface writhes with swirling chasing and whiplash lines as three winds churn the ocean waves on the base. The silversmiths responsible for this luxury item were identified in the 1990s, when the Gorham archives were donated to Brown University's John Hay Library.[13] F. O. Erichsen did the spinning of the bodies (the use of this mechanical process was still a handcraft skill), and Robert Bain spent 257 hours chasing the surface after the piece was assembled. The cost for making the piece was $700, indicating a retail price in Gorham's store of $1,400.

The cup was a point of pride for the firm, being featured in

Opposite:
Designed by John T. Curran for
Tiffany & Co., Newark
Presentation Coffee Set, 1897
gold, ivory
8 ¾ x 5 ¾ x 2 ½" (coffee pot)

promotional literature as late as 1915.[14] While craftsmanship made it beautiful and lent it prestige, the Art Nouveau style was less desirable to America's Gilded Age elite, and the cup only sold in 1916, eleven years after it was completed. It was custom-inscribed and presented to New Jersey insurance executive Robert J. Hillas to commemorate his fortieth anniversary with the company.

In the end, the real difference between art metalsmithing today and the remarkable craftsmanship of America's Gilded Age metalsmiths is one of attribution. What the Arts and Crafts movement, both in Europe and in the United States, accomplished was the celebration of the hand of the artisan. However, even the Arts and Crafts movement often segregated the artist from the craftsman, relying on the equivalent of brand names to sell products and casting the real craftspeople into shadow.

Ulysses Grant Dietz is Chief Curator and Curator of Decorative Arts at the Newark Museum.

Designed by William Christmas Codman
for Gorham Manufacturing Company, Providence, RI
Made by F. O. Erichsen and Robert Bain
Presentation Cup, 1905
silver
19 x 13"

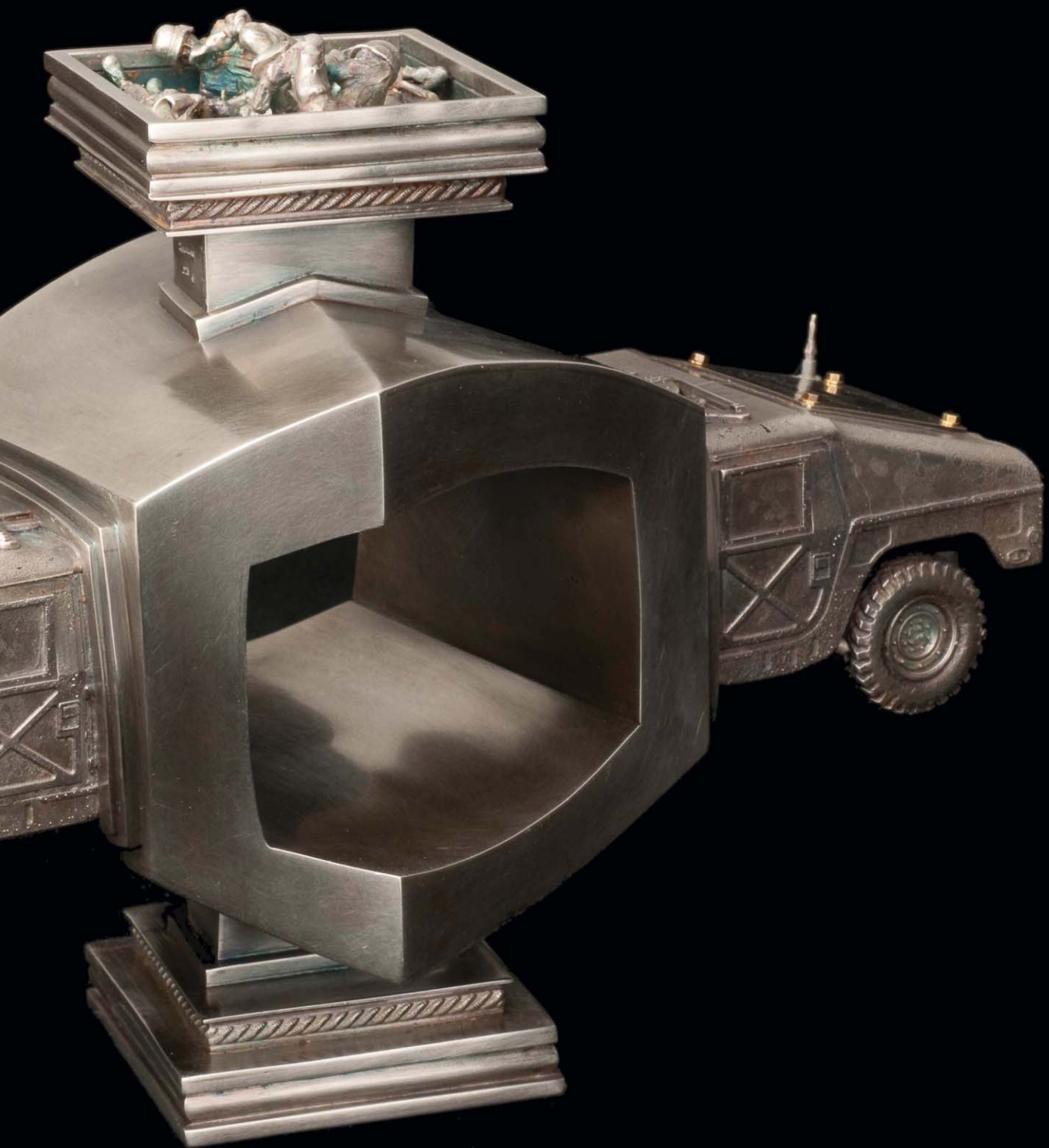
All works illustrated are in the collection of The Newark Museum.

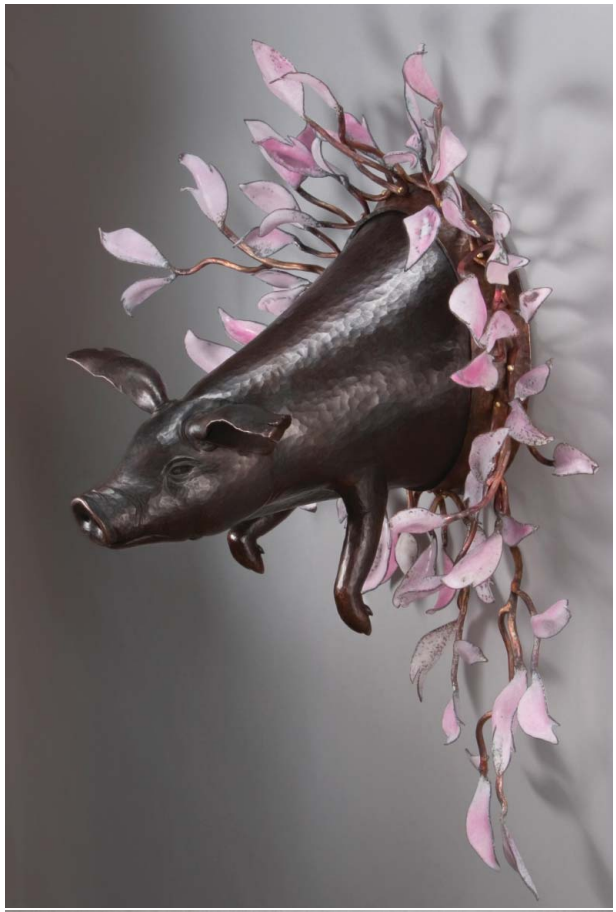
1. *Ajouré* translates most readily from the French as "openwork." Relates to the term *à jour,* meaning "to the day" or "to the light," suggesting openness, allowing light to pass.
2. "Ada Rehan, Famous Actress, is Dead," in *New York Times*, January 9, 1916.
3. See Janet Zapata, "American plique-à-jour enameling," *The Magazine Antiques*, December 1996, page 817. It is likely that the technique was brought to the United States by a European enameler. Importing skilled workers from abroad was common practice across American manufacturing in this era.
4. See Ibid., 812–21. The term itself probably derives from the French, *appliqué à jour* (applied to openwork).
5. For the 1903 exhibition, see Irene Sargent, "Notes," in *The Craftsman* 3, (March 1903): 390; for the 1904 exposition, see Janet Zapata, "The Jewelry and Silver of F. Walter Lawrence," in *The Magazine Antiques* (April 2004): 124–33.
6. Janet Zapata, *The Jewelry and Enamels of Louis Comfort Tiffany* (New York: Harry N Abrams, 1993), p. 99.
7. See Charles DeKay, *The Artwork of Louis C. Tiffany* (New York: n.p., 1914), p. 32. Louis C. Tiffany gave an inscribed copy of this book to the Newark Museum library in 1917.
8. The three pieces included nearly 20 troy ounces of gold, which was at $20.67 per ounce at the time. The making cost in the Tiffany factory was $755.25 (object file, Newark Museum). This cost would translate to $40,000 today.
9. The drawings were donated to the Newark Museum by Tiffany & Co. in 1987. The 1904 reference was provided by the daughter of the original owner, who sold the set at auction in the late 1970s. It reappeared at Sotheby's in New York in 1986 and was purchased by the Newark Museum (object file, Newark Museum).
10. The Tiffany & Co. archives in Parsippany, New Jersey, owns a gold coffee set with tray that comes as close to Art Nouveau as anything ever made by the firm; but it is unique.
11. Object files, Newark Museum. The 28-cent per hour wage equals $7.61 in 2013, slightly over minimum wage in New Jersey. The 42-cent per hour wage is the equivalent of $11.41 today.
12. See Charles H. Carpenter, Jr., *Gorham Silver, 1831–1981* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1982), pp. 68, 222–24.
13. L. J. Pristo, *Martelé, Gorham's Art Nouveau Silver* (Phoenix, AZ: Heritage Antiques, 2001).
14. Photocopy of a promotional brochure featuring "Great Silversmiths," 1915 (object file, Newark Museum).

The Anti-Trophy

BY GLEN R. BROWN

Stephen F. Saracino
War Trophy. Nation Building 3rd. Place. 2010
sterling silver
9 x 7 x 4"





Miel-Margarita Paredes
Appetite, 2004
copper, enamel, brass
22 x 16 x 11"

Miel-Margarita Paredes
Gnaw #2, from "Gnaw" series,
2008–10
copper, enamel
diameter 5"

ARTISTS HAVE LONG recognized that common objects, when stood upon their heads through the medium of art, may spark epiphanies about aspects of function and meaning that pass unnoticed under ordinary circumstances. This kind of rhetorical inversion is fundamental to recent examples of what could be called the "anti-trophy": an object that possesses physical attributes commonly associated with trophies but at the same time satirizes, misrepresents, or distorts the trophy by emphasizing the very things that it ordinarily excludes. Among these features are anonymity, inadequacy, and doubt, the implications of which extend well beyond the context of the trophy to interweave with the broader fabric of cultural identity. There is a potential in such works for commentary on wide-ranging social and psychological issues and even the more elusive concept of human nature. The anti-trophies of artist John Dodds, for example, invoke specific legal, governmental, educational, and health-care issues currently in public consciousness, but they also raise more general and timeless questions about vanity, competition, and justice.

The fact that many makers of anti-trophies were trained in metalsmithing techniques should not be surprising, given that our most common notion of the trophy, the trophy cup, has its origins in silversmithing. One of the earliest examples, now in the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan, was produced by the seventeenth-century silversmith Jesse Kyp for a horse race in New England. Today the majority of trophies in North America are made primarily of plastic (a suggestive fact to which I will return), but the most iconic sports trophies—The Stanley Cup, Davis Cup, and America's Cup—are still sterling silver or silver alloys. Some contemporary trophies, when commissioned from such master metalsmiths as Ubaldo Vitali, can reach the highest levels of artistry. The anti-trophy might therefore have something useful to tell us about tradition and identity in the field of metalsmithing in addition to the insights that it may yield into larger contemporary issues.

The oldest Western manifestations of the trophy, erected on the battlefields of ancient Greece, are surely relevant to the history of metalworking, perhaps not only because their chief components were the products of armorers. The word *trophy* derives from the term *tropaian*, a reference to the pivotal point of victory, or "turning" of the enemy in a battle. Upon the precise spot of such a decisive action, a trophy was ritually assembled from the breastplate, helmet, sword, and shield of a vanquished combatant by nailing these battered and bloodstained spoils to a post or tree in representation of a standing warrior.[1] Such macabre offerings to the god of war may bear little visual resemblance to today's gilt-plastic bowlers and ballplayers perched on their iridescent columns and faux-marble bases, but how deeply are the modern trophy's martial origins really buried beneath such apparently innocuous commemorations of athletic achievement? Do traces of bloodlust linger in the trophy's symbolism? Do today's trophies mask primitive competitive impulses that we might wish to gloss over but cannot eradicate from our own human nature?

Such questions are implicitly broached by Stephen Saracino in a 2010 anti-trophy that evokes the trophy's bloody past

The fact that many makers of anti-trophies were trained in metalsmithing techniques should not be surprising.

and recontextualizes it in a modern panoply of armor-plated Humvee and Kevlar-clad soldiery. *Trophy for Nation Building: 3rd Place*, a satirical but mirthless award in the vein of sculptor David Smith's 1930s Medals for Dishonor, exploits the trophy's associations with victory and pride of achievement in order to make all the more disdainful a condemnation of war. "They don't give trophies for war," Saracino observes, "so I thought that I'd get the ball rolling by awarding one for our time in Iraq. I made the trophy for third place not only because the war was unnecessary but also because we didn't do a very good job of nation building."[2] The ignominious plaque, affixed to the trunk of the Humvee with tiny brass screws in a mockery of congratulatory brevity, achieves, in other words, a simultaneous shaming through indecorous celebration and a damning with faint praise. Though it targets both war in general and a specific historical episode, Saracino's work also inverts the trophy's function, converting it from a positively charged symbol into a tainted tool collusive with the baser side of humanity.

It can hardy be incidental that *Trophy for Nation Building* is designed as a bracelet, though one that, given its size and weight, would be an onerous and conspicuous burden to bear. In contrast to the trophy's spur to pleasurable recollection, Saracino's anti-trophy seems calculated to elicit lament and even penance from its wearer. Atonement is an implicit theme, and a strange, quasi-religious air envelops the piece, relating it to a reliquary. Rather than the bones of saints, however, Saracino's bracelet contains tiny renditions of dead soldiers that lie supine with calla lilies in their rigid hands or curled in fetal positions sucking their thumbs. The communal coffin in which they lie recalls a baptismal font, a reflection of Saracino's musings on religion and conflict, particularly the aspect of crusade latent in the Iraq war. "I thought of the phrase 'baptism under fire,'" he recalls. "The baptismal font represents the beginning of life for a Christian. You're baptized, and you become a soldier of Christ. But when you fill the font with dead people it takes some of the aura of religion away. How many people have died in the name of God?"

A trophy that poses such a question clearly merits status as an anti-trophy, not just for contradicting the celebratory connotations of an achievement award but also because it asks us to reconsider the events for which it was conferred. Such required reassessment is also fundamental to the anti-trophies of Miel-Margarita Paredes, though her work is visually quite different from Saracino's, and her inspiration lies in another sort of trophy. Having spent part of her childhood in the Fiji Islands, Paredes did not encounter her first big-game-trophy mount until she was a teenager, when she came face to face with a large deer head staring out blankly from the wall of a Wisconsin living room. "It really shocked me," she remembers, "because I had no experience with hunting culture. It wasn't that I thought it was horrible or wrong. I just found it bizarre. Later, when I started these trophy works I thought about the

John Dodds
Drunk Driving Trophy, 2011
INSCRIPTION: Congratulations, You are still on the road, after multiple drunk driving offenses.
silver metal clay, enamel, beer can, metal toy car, plastic bag, marble, brass, plastic trophy column
13 ½ x 6 x 2 ½"

John Dodds
Suicide Trophy, 2011
INSCRIPTION: You Finally Got Something Right
Hawaiian Koa, aluminum, brass, plastic chickens, silver metal clay, copper, wood, brass, plastic trophy columns
20 ½ x 8 x 3"

The "big-stick" symbolism of pride, virility, and power is undoubtedly a major factor behind the continued popularity of the trophy mount today,

Ry Rocklen
Second to None, 2011
trophies, trophy parts, wood
94 ½ x 146 x 39"
Photo courtesy of the artist and UNTITLED, New York

Opposite:
Second to None, 2011 (detail)

kinds of animals that were being killed and put on display: the kinds of animals that were considered worthy opponents."[3]

The word *opponents* is apt. No doubt the tradition of collecting and preserving hunting trophies can be traced back to prehistory, but the practice of taxidermy only became widespread in the Victorian period, when British adventurers, pursuing colonialist aspirations, began adorning their billiard rooms with the menacing heads of Bengal tigers and Cape buffalo as well as *khanda* (swords) from India and Zulu shields from Africa. Such symbols of conquest in exotic lands—the closest parallels in modern times to the trophies of the ancient Greeks—became popular in the United States during the time of Teddy Roosevelt's big game hunts in Africa and the American West.

The "big-stick" symbolism of pride, virility, and power is undoubtedly a major factor behind the continued popularity of the trophy mount today, and it would be easy to imagine an anti-trophy mount designed to counter the darker aspects of its psychology. Paredes, however, chose to pursue a subtler inversion: one that has less to do with human self-esteem than with the emblematic status of certain animals. Why, she asked herself, is a deer an appropriate candidate for a trophy mount when a rodent or a domestic goat is not? How would the concept of the animal trophy change if the animal in question were not wild and potentially dangerous? To explore such questions, she linked *Appetite*, the first sculpture in her "Trophies" series, to memories of childhood and a pig nicknamed Houdini for his habit of periodically escaping into the mangrove swamps. "All of these big, burly Samoan and Fijian guys from the neighborhood would take off after him," she recalls. "Eventually they would come back completely worn out from capturing this gigantic pig. He seemed to be a worthy opponent for anyone."

A trophy mount—albeit one of raised copper, brass, and enamel—that commemorates the recapture of a domestic pig qualifies as an anti-trophy. Although the sculpture's content may be autobiographical, its form deflates the romantic notions of risk, courage, and heroism traditionally associated with big-game hunting. Paredes's exploration of animal hierarchies within the symbolism of human self-valorization results, at least indirectly, in a conceptual inversion of the trophy mount itself. By invoking the mundane as content (a domestic creature as opposed to a wild animal), her works satirize the vehicle of that content as a strange, even absurd, object.

A more deliberate strategy of *argumentum ad absurdum* underscores the anti-trophies of John Dodds, who has expressed views on a wide range of social and political issues through a tongue-in-cheek array of facetious awards. His *Drunk Driving Trophy*, for example, elevates a smashed sports car on a plinth of gleaming gold-and-red tail-light plastic flanked by a partly consumed six pack of beer. The latter—consisting of tiny bottles rendered in enameled Precious Clay Metal and set in a cardboard and aluminum carton—is toylike, conjuring the innocence of the potential victims of the award-recipient's conduct. The engraved plaque, stamped twice in allusion to the double vision of intoxication, bears the

1989
BEVERLY HILLS L.L.
MAJOR YANKEES
MATTHEW MESLER

The anti-trophy can be a vehicle for investigation of a wide range of subjects, from the autobiographical, social, or political to the philosophical.

Jaydan Moore
Trophy #3, 2011
copper, found aluminum pot, pewter, maple, steel
11 ¼ x 10 x 5 ¼"
Photo: Jim Escalante

message "Congratulations; You are Still on the Road": a biting indictment of a legal system that "continues to allow drunken drivers to retain their driving privileges."[4]

Through such sculptures as *Red-Tape Trophy*, *Education Trophy,* and the sardonic and unsettling *Suicide Trophy*, Dodds reverses the commendatory function of awards, producing anti-trophies to commemorate satirically what he finds to be examples of the antithesis of merit. The specific content of his work varies, but the overarching theme of his "Trophies for the Ineffectual" is the current debasement of the trophy and the possible social consequences of emphasizing inclusiveness above merit. He is not alone in observing that in some contemporary contexts the symbolism of the trophy—now mass-produced, appropriately, in cheap plastic—may have become diluted to the point of undermining incentive. Saracino laments the impact of what he calls "touchy-feely" sentiment on the trophy, and metalsmith Jaydan Moore notes, "the growing number of insignificant awards doled out every day."[5] The phenomenon is perhaps most obvious in the context of grade-school athletics. As an example, Dodds cites the American Youth Soccer Organization's practice of "awarding trophies to all children in the league regardless of how many matches a player participated in or how well the player performed."

Artist Ry Rocklen notes the pervasiveness of egalitarian trophies as well, and at first glance his imposing *Second to None*—incorporating gleaming parts from scores of salvaged trophies—might seem an ostentatious mockery of the everyone-gets-an-award phenomenon. Mounting a spectacle in which multiplicity plays prominent visual and metaphorical roles, the sculpture intentionally conveys a degree of both unity and uniformity. Having encountered nearly a hundred assorted old trophies in the "limbo" of a second-hand store, Rocklen began contemplating ways in which these forlorn objects might be redeemed through art. "I thought that it would be lovely to unify all of the different trophies so that the golden figurines at the top would be at the same level," he explains. "I wanted to combine them all into one *über*-trophy simply through the vernacular of trophy construction, just adding parts that were readily available through trophy wholesalers. Everything is bolted together because I wanted it to have an identity as one trophy."[6]

The unity of *Second to None*, coupled with its suggestion of easy and endless expansion, might initially seem geared to invert the trophy's main function of elevating one individual or team above all others. Rocklen's inspiration was not, however, the symbolism of trophies in the moment of their conferral but rather a more tragic meaning, time: specifically, the message of the *memento mori*. The pathos of abandoned trophies, fallen from a state of cherished preservation through the inexorable severance of death, inheres largely in their plaques, which are inscribed with names of the faceless departed and dates that raise echoes from an obscure past. Through these links to loss and absence, abandoned trophies embody the abject. Their inversion results not in deflation of aspirations to undying fame but, on the contrary, in a kind of revival, even resurrection, of this dream in the

form of of art. In the column-and-architrave construction of *Second to None,* Rocklen creates the equivalent of a neoclassical cenotaph in which lost souls might convene for eternity. Life and its commemoration in trophies may be brief, the sculpture suggests, but art is long.

Allusions to both art and redemption are equally salient in the "Trophies" series of Jaydan Moore, who has employed inversion rhetorically as an avenue to gaining insight into the trophy as symbol as well as literally a construction technique that highlights value distinctions between the common and rare. Both forms of inversion are crucial, because Moore's works ultimately explore the connection between the trophy as concept and as object. This line of enquiry inevitably intertwines with metalsmithing history, since one of the key influences on the series was Gerald W. R. Ward's introduction to the book *Marks of Achievement: Four Centuries of American Presentation Silver.*[7] The author's discussion of such frameworks as commemoration, motivation, and compensation, in which presentation silver historically acquired meaning, prompted Moore to reflect on contemporary culture and to add another context—participation—to the list. "The cheap plastic trophy found at most convenience stores speaks as much about our modern society as loving cups once did," he argues.

Intrigued by Ward's argument that the trophy cup can be traced back to altruistic giving among American colonists of such objects as goblets and punch bowls, Moore conceived of anti-trophies to counteract the less noble associations of trophies today. Pursuing this end partly through emphasizing the physical qualities of the trophy cup, he stressed its functional aspects. Employing such utilitarian discards as old copper canisters for flour, sugar, and coffee, unwanted gelatin molds, and a worn-out aluminum rice cooker, he constructed trophylike sculptures as vehicles of humility and anonymity rather than hubris and fame. A less obvious but more significant theme in these works is preservation, since the castoff components, like the abandoned trophies in Rocklen's *Second to None*, become elevated through art to a status beyond deterioration and obscurity. At the same time, it is significant that the uniqueness of Moore's trophies derives largely from scratches, dents, and other wear imparted to them not by the artist but rather by unknown hands in the course of use. Our contemporary society, Moore suggests, has submitted recognition to a process of mass production and proliferated such debased objects as plastic "World's Best Dad" awards. In this form, he argues, the trophy has become "an object of instant gratification that we can discard." In contrast, Moore's "Trophy" series reverses that fate, rescuing discards that were never intended for fame and elevating them to eternity through art.

Art is not, of course, the only context in which the trophy has been inverted for rhetorical purposes, nor is the redemptive, ennobling, or preserving nature of art a consistent theme among all anti-trophies by contemporary artists. Distinctions among the works of Moore, Rocklen, Dodds, Paredes, and Saracino are significant enough to suggest that the anti-trophy can be a vehicle for investigation of a wide range of subjects, from the autobiographical, social, or political to the philosophical, from the specific and contemporary to the abstract and timeless. Given this broad scope, describing the anti-trophy as if it were a genre would seem unwarranted; nor has its frequency been substantial enough to qualify as a trend. Nevertheless, in relation to contemporary society and such themes as achievement, inadequacy and recognition, there is something worth contemplating in the fact that such anti-trophies have appeared in art today.

Jaydan Moore
Trophy #4, 2011
walnut, found cup, brass
10 ½ x 6 x 3 ½"

Glen R. Brown is a professor of art history and Associate Head of the Art Department at Kansas State University.

1. See Ellen Anna Osterkamp, "The Classical Trophy: From Ritual Offering to Regal Ornament," M.A, thesis, University of Oregon, 2012, p. 1.
2. Stephen Saracino (all quotes), personal communication, July 10, 2013.
3. Miel-Margarita Paredes (all quotes), personal communication, July 11, 2013.
4. John Dodds (all quotes), personal communication, July 10, 2013.
5. Jaydan Moore (all quotes), unpublished artist's statement, 2010.
6. Ry Rocklen (all quotes), personal communication, July 11, 2013.
7. David B. Warren, Kathrine S. Howe, and Michael K. Brown, *Marks of Achievement: Four Centuries of American Presentation Silver* (Houston: Museum of Fine Arts, in association with Harry N. Abrams, 1987).

Rhyming in Place
The Steel Sculpture of John Rais

BY PATRICIA HARRIS AND DAVID LYON

Push, 2012
steel
12 x 9 x 10"
Photo: John Polak

Cloud to Ground, 2008 (showing luminescence)
steel, patina, automotive paint,
phosphorescent paint
33 x 25 x 17"
Photo: John Polak

HOT FORGED STEEL grabbed John Rais as an undergraduate at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design. The first time he tried it, he "heated up a bar of steel and moved metal with a hammer, and something felt really right about it," he recalls. "It was a very primal feeling." He had already switched his major from industrial design to sculpture. By narrowing his focus to steel, he ultimately chose a career that straddles fine and decorative arts.

The two worlds find common ground in architectural commissions, as Rais's work for the Yale University Art Gallery so aptly demonstrates. The project was part of the museum's nine-year renovation and expansion that concluded in December 2012. Rais was approached by the curatorial staff to create a three-story staircase railing in one of the buildings joined to Louis Kahn's iconic main structure. Although it functions as a practical architectural feature, the railing was accessioned by Yale as a work of art, not as hardware.

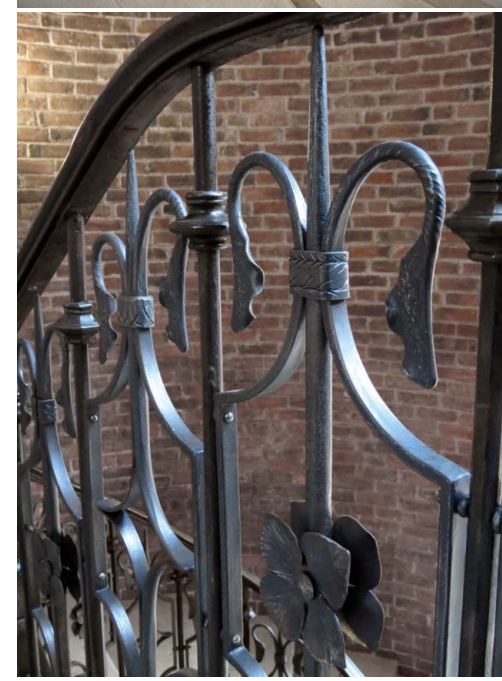
The early 20th-century ironwork of Samuel Yellin, who created many of the gates and architectural features on the Yale campus, served as inspiration. Rais was ultimately charged with developing a design that would be simpatico with the historic works but expressive of his own style.

"One of those things that forging can do so well is to make steel sensual."

He invested nearly three years in the project, including two full years of fabrication and another three months installing the 92 sections that span 125 linear feet. The masterful construction of pickets and forged quatrefoil dogwood flowers is a tour de force of design and meticulous craftsmanship in forged steel. The flower motif, which Rais selected over another design that he had liked on paper, is both timeless and a perfect match to the Gothic Revival sensibility of the building. "It's a flower with symbolic meaning in almost every culture. It stands for strength, or knowledge, or longevity."

Rais divides his time between studio art and architectural metalwork. As this article goes to press, he is completing a historic restoration project for a South Florida house by Addison Mizner, who is generally credited with popularizing the Mediterranean Revival style on the East Coast in the 1920s. Rais's contributions—outdoor hanging lanterns, a lay light—are designed to complement Mizner's original designs but are better suited to the Florida climate and to contemporary building and electrical codes. He is also working on several architectural features for the Michigan home of a collector of his work, including a stunning fireplace screen for the master bedroom.

A keen-eyed viewer will recognize signature shapes in each of the projects, for Rais has developed a distinctive personal vocabulary of forged forms. Perhaps the most ubiquitous is the "bean plate," so dubbed by British blacksmiths because it resembles a broad bean. Traditionally used to attach a handle to a door, the form is also known as a Suffolk latch, after the area in Britain where it was first used in the 17th century. Rais began making this form when he worked as a village blacksmith in a historic village museum, before attending graduate school at Cranbrook Academy of Art.



Yale Art Galleries Main Staircase, 2010–12
forged steel
92 sections, 125 linear feet spanning three floors of the museum
PHOTO: JOHN FRENCH

Yale Art Galleries Main Staircase, 2010–12 (detail)

By featuring the bean plate as an attachment, Rais elevates the transition between two disparate parts. Rather than hiding a junction, he makes it key to the design. In the 2004 vessel *Hard Leisure*, for example, the bean plate visually mediates the angular and curved forms. This especially complex vessel incorporates a number of signature Rais forms, gaining much of its visual tension from the contrast between perforated steel and plate steel embossed with texture. The joinery of the plate metal pieces incorporates angular metal elements that have been riveted together. But the "handle" for *Hard Leisure*, which also allows it to sit solidly on a surface, is attached with a riveted bean plate that echoes the curve of the handle form.

For Rais it is a celebration of steel. Suffolk latches were typically very thin because the smiths of that era were trying to cover a lot of area with a small amount of what was an expensive material. His predecessors "were making door latches for the rising middle class," while Rais transforms the form into a flamboyant steel gesture. In some of his early wall vessels he used this form to move from line to plane, almost reveling in the juncture.

The bean plate has other qualities as well. Its shape references the body, and when mounted on a "stalk," it resembles both a lotus pod and a gingko leaf. The sensual associations are anything but accidental. "In almost all my work, I'm thinking about sensuality," Rais says. "One of those things that forging can do so well is to make steel sensual. It can make steel soft. It can make it almost romantic."

That is particularly true of Rais's vessels, which are so physical and palpable that they invite the human touch. The bent handle that is prominent in his design vocabulary practically cries out for grasping. Because they are steel, the objects don't necessarily have the "do not touch" prohibition that a vessel in wood, ceramic, glass, or even woven fiber would. The shape dates from early in his postgraduate school career when Rais began to make vessels that were design extensions of tools. They featured tapered handles with a hole near the end to make it possible to hang them on the wall. It is part of Rais's genius that his designs—even of utterly

Hard Leisure, 2004
steel, copper, brass, patina, paint
24 x 29 x 24"
PHOTO: D. JAMES DEE

It is part of Rais's genius that his designs—even of utterly impractical objects—seem so familiar that they invite the viewer not just to look but also to touch.

impractical objects—seem so familiar that they invite the viewer not just to look but also to touch.

Rais frequently pairs the essentially phallic handle form with an equally sexual feminine shape—an almost labial elongated pod, as in *Propped Up 6* and *Propped Up 8*. Oddly enough, the form originated not as an explicit sexual reference but as a wholesome, almost innocent icon of summer. He was inspired by canoes paddling down the Delaware River where he used to swim in the summer of 1997. He gradually developed these forms away from the classic canoe and toward a more generic vessel form with varying proportions.

Rais's formal vocabulary is not limited to shapes. He is an enthusiastic and adept user of perforated steel, which occasionally appears on its own as a structural element but is more often layered. By fire-welding a layer of perforated steel over another layer with a different pattern of perforation, Rais is able to achieve complex textural effects. It is perhaps inevitable that the patterning of perforated steel invites comparison to woven material, and since many of Rais's

Mannequin Skin, 2006
cast iron, enamel
14 x 16 x 12"
PHOTO: KOHLER CO.

perforated steel objects are at least technically vessels, they have a design affinity with basketry. When Rais used the term "basket" in the names of some early perforated vessels, a new audience discovered his work.

"I have sold more vessels as a fiber artist than I ever have as a blacksmith or metal worker," Rais says with a certain amusement. In the art world, he realized, blacksmithing is a "craft without an application. Woodturning is the application and the craft in one. In ceramics you think of functional pottery and sculpture. But blacksmithing is just a process that isn't attached to a body of work." By naming the vessels as baskets, they could be viewed in their own right as art objects, not as the odd byproduct of a field of metalworking. "I was attached to an application that people could recognize," Rais says. "It allowed people to enter my work through a much easier path."

But Rais was less interested in becoming the superstar of metal basketry than in exploring texture and sensuality. He works extensively with a power hammer, both to rough out work quickly and to create unusual textural surfaces. He not only make his own hammers with the power hammer, but also creates plates to stamp textures onto sheet metal, as he did with the insectoid wings on *Propped Up 6*.

He also forges complex, often rough surfaces to contrast with smooth lines and soft surfaces. In the 2012 vessel *Push*, a little less than half the handle consists of rough, even sharp edges while the other portion is smooth and tapered all the way to the bean plate that attaches it to the slightly heart-shaped, flat-bottomed vessel. The simple circular perforations of the steel wrapping around the sides have a similarly "soft" and almost feminine appeal, while the unadorned, undecorated surfaces exude a masculine vigor. The point of balance on the handle is precise: The bottom of the vessel remains parallel with the floor, even when picked up.

Push diverges both conceptually and aesthetically from Rais's earlier vessels. In some ways, it has more in common with the conceptually hermetic, self-contained objects of Rais's 2006 residency at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center in Sheboygan,

Refuse with Coffee Cups, 2006
cast iron
10 x 12 x 11"
PHOTO: KOHLER CO.

Wisconsin, part of the Kohler Co.'s Arts/Industry residency program. *Mannequin Skin* is one of a group of cast and enameled objects. The fleshy paint color and the smooth rolls of the sides—almost like creased flesh—make the piece an object either of loathing or desire. (Another casting enameled in a rich, dark brown, called *Chocolate*, elicits a similar response.)

Rais intended these "to be fetish objects for a culture of excess and irrational exuberance." At the time, the U.S. economy was booming, and people were fully engaged in the material culture. During the Kohler residency, Rais made other self-contained, self-referential pieces like *Factory Trash* and *Refuse with Coffee Cups* in which steel seems to mimic life. The cast-brass zippered purse with faucet handle grips actually prefigures a work like *Push*—except that *Rabbit* is a coy reference to his patron, Kohler, while *Push* is solely about itself.

Between the two sensibilities represented by *Rabbit* and *Push* lies some of Rais's most strictly beautiful and nominally functional work: his fire screens and fireplace tools, such as *Fiery Fire Tools*, in which the handles taper into dancing flames.

"I'm trying to reference certain things by giving the least amount of visual information possible."

A near-copy of an earlier work, it was a commission from a member of the curatorial staff at Yale.

After years of making architectural pieces that surround living spaces, it seems only natural that Rais would branch out into furniture. The scale gives him a freedom to be more complex while also tackling a level of narrative that echoes the craft traditions—and whimsy—of furniture design going back to Art Nouveau. He is currently creating a series with a meteorological theme. The *Cloud to Ground* table is shaped like a cloud with a single lightning bolt extending beneath it. The lightning bolt is a three-dimensional model of an image that Rais found in an online search of lightning photographs.

"When you see a picture of a lightning bolt," Rais explains, "it's hard to see it in space because it's nothing but light against blackness. There's no context for depth perception."

Tonare, 2009
steel, patina, automotive paint
25 x 26 x 17"

When Rais forges a lightning bolt from steel, however, we see it in the round and realize how much it resembles roots or inverted antlers. It has a kind of primal energy, a force of nature. To further mimic lightning, Rais painted the bolt in *Cloud to Ground* with phosphorescent powder so it would glow in the dark. A variation on the same theme, *Tonare* explores the lightning-bolt motif as it elongates and comes closer to the ground. "With these pieces," explains Rais, I'm trying to reference certain things by giving the least amount of visual information possible. I'm relying on your cognitive memory to fill in all those blanks." As an example he points to the lapped hump on the bases of the two tables, a lap joint that recalls siding on a house.

The most recent of the group, *Morning Storm*, features four identical lightning bolts arrayed in a circle. Scorched paint on the top of the table suggests a lightning strike. Like the other pieces in the series, *Morning Storm* is a self-sufficient artistic object as well as a piece of functional furniture. It differs from the earlier pieces, however, in the design that Rais has engineered to support the structure. One prong of each of the four lightning bolts reaches the ground, providing a symmetrical support for one end of the cloud formation. The other end balances on a single steel rod, bent twice like the leg of a crouching figure. It is at once grounded—and ready to spring into action.

Rais also made a stainless-steel cloud mailbox with lightning bolt for one of his long-time collectors. He does not yet feel that he has exhausted the meteorological series, which to date he has pursued during pauses in his other commissioned work. "I'll make a few more pieces with it and see if I have any new ideas. I feel like I should stick with it a little longer just to see what happens." Or until another inspiration strikes.

Patricia Harris and David Lyon are writers based in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Furthermore:
www.johnraisstudios.com

Morning Storm, 2012
steel, glass, paint, scorched paint
17 x 48 x 25"
PHOTO: JOHN POLAK

John Paul Miller (1918–2013)

Ursula Ilse-Neuman
Curator of Jewelry, Museum of Arts and Design, New York

THE CAREER OF goldsmith and enameler John Paul Miller followed the trajectory of American studio jewelry from its infancy through seven decades of its evolution, and his passing at the age of ninety-four is occasion to celebrate his lifetime of creative achievement. From his earliest marine-inspired forms to his last creations, he brought light and poetry as well as technical invention and perfection to the goldsmith's art. His works are suffused with a love of nature and with the energy and rhythms of the music he listened to as he worked.

Miller's development as a pioneer of American studio jewelry is closely linked to the history of the Museum of Arts and Design, which was founded as the Museum for Contemporary Crafts in 1956. Even before the museum opened its doors, Miller had featured prominently in the American Craft Council's 1953 exhibition "Designer Craftsmen U.S.A." He participated in the Museum for Contemporary Crafts' inaugural exhibition, "Craftsmanship in a Changing World" in 1956 and was given one of its first solo shows, "Jewelry: John Paul Miller" in 1964. He later contributed to such landmark exhibitions as "Objects: USA" (1969) and "Craft Today: Poetry of the Physical" (1986). A 2010 retrospective at the Cleveland Museum of Art presented the full range of his astounding oeuvre.

Miller's family moved from Pennsylvania to Cleveland when he was a boy, and after graduation from high school, he studied at the Cleveland School of Art (later, Cleveland Institute of Art). His interests were wide-ranging, and he pursued them with an active curiosity and eagerness to learn. Fascinated by the accomplishments of his classmate and long-term friend, silversmith Frederick Miller (no relation), John Paul Miller began making jewelry in the 1940s but continued to think of himself as a painter even when he returned to Cleveland after the war. By 1951, however, when he attended the legendary Handy & Harman Workshops under the direction of Baron Erik Fleming, eminent silversmith to the king of Sweden, Miller had made the transition to full-time jeweler.

Miller's discovery of archival documents on Etruscan gold granulation changed his life course. Determined to master the art of fusing tiny gold beads to a gold surface without the use of solder, he developed and refined the process until he could work with granules smaller than a grain of salt, eventually even producing extremely fine rectangular ones.

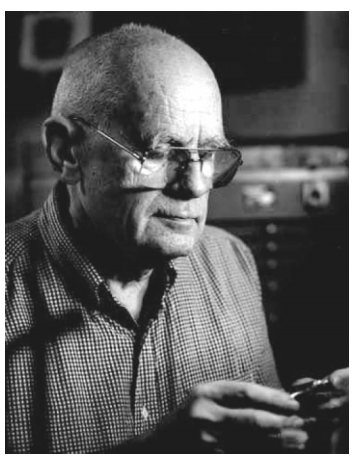
Impressive as his mastery of granulation was, Miller never made the exacting technique an end in itself. He was an enthusiastic outdoorsman, and his experiments with granulation led him to notice surface textures, designs, and patterns in the natural world—particularly the bodies of spiders, moths, and snails, and the tentacles of sea creatures—that would inspire his incredibly intricate craftsmanship. The virtuosity of his granulation and his close observation of nature constitute the hallmarks of his finest work.

The Museum of Arts and Design is proud to hold two of Miller's remarkable bejeweled "fossils" in its collection: his cloisonné enameled *Flounder and Fossil* (1959) and his gold-granulated *Armored Polyp* neckpiece (1969), masterpieces that never fail to thrill visitors. Yet Miller could be a very modest man. When complimented on the jewelry creation of an African moth, for example, he attributed its beauty to nature's design of the creature, not his own artistry.

Miller was a dinner guest at the American Craft Museum twenty years ago, when I was just starting out as a curator, and I had the honor of sitting next to him. The evening flew by as he talked not only of jewelry and metalwork, but of music, his travels to Antarctica, his students and colleagues, and so much more.

John Paul Miller left an indelible imprint as one of the world's most accomplished and imaginative jewelers and one of the museum's most cherished artists. He will be missed, but we will continue to take pleasure in introducing future audiences to his unique creations.

Jeweler John Paul Miller at his bench.



Thomas Gentille
Jeweler

AS I WRITE this, spring is moments away. Overnight leaves are unfurling on a climbing rosebush which every year tenaciously refuses to bloom. Toward the end of April, say the 23rd, the garden will be rich and gloriously

green. That April day would have been John Paul Miller's ninety-fifth birthday. He enjoyed his garden. In the summers we sometimes spoke of planting and blooming. About three weeks before his passing we spoke on the telephone for half an hour about jewelry and Munich and many other things.

John Paul in 1955, at the Cleveland Institute of Art, was my sophomore Two- and Three-Dimensional Design instructor. He did not then teach jewelry. After graduation, I lightly touched base with him although often many years would intervene. Four years ago I phoned him in Brecksville, he was working in his garden when the phone rang. We had a short but fine conversation. After that we spoke every ten or twelve weeks. Slowly over the last two years, we talked every five or six weeks.

John Paul, a brilliant teacher, was also one of the shyest and most modest men I have known. I think he never quite believed he was such a superb instructor. A few years ago he told me he was sick to his stomach, literally, every day, before teaching. He taught for forty years. We knew as students that his being before us was uncomfortably difficult, but we did not know what a monumental amount of courage it had required. In those, my years at school, John Paul was hypersensitive. If you acknowledged him in the hallway, he would blush brightly. Out of respect, his students would look at the floor, or use some other subterfuge when passing him, to prevent his embarrassment.

There were other days we saw him when his face was a brighter red. We knew then he had been working on a new piece of jewelry the night before. He had watched the flame so closely while doing granulation he was sunburned from the flames' radiation. The genius of his work was always birth by fire.

John Paul loved film, both photography and cinematography. In our 2D class he gave an animated film project. There were three rotating classes of roughly thirty students each. He would break us down into groups of five or six. Each group would produce six seconds of film. Each student, after group decision on a subject, would be responsible for one layer of image. My group did a kite, flying. I was responsible for the background sky, which I did in blue-gray woodcut. John Paul did the photography, one frame at a time, for fifteen groups. He then spliced them together deciding juxtaposition, to produce a ninety-second film. Ironically and wondrously, though no group knew what the others did, a story would evolve. We saw other films from other years, and all were amazing. Ours was added to the end, enriching the chance story line.

John Paul Miller
Armored Polyp, 1969
18k yellow gold, enamel; fabricated, granulated, assembled
9 x 4 ¾ x ¾"
COLLECTION OF MUSEUM OF ARTS AND DESIGN
PHOTO: JOHN BIGELOW TAYLOR

John Paul Miller is arguably the greatest goldsmith of the twentieth century, but don't argue it with me. You might mention Lalique who had an enormous team of craftsmen making his work, versus John Paul who made everything, including each single minute gold sphere of granulation.

In speaking to you of John Paul Miller I must speak of myself; the reason is simple. He gave so much. I am of him. Every day in every work I do, some part of me remembers his teaching. I am forever his student. He is forever my beloved teacher, a courageous man, cherished friend, magnificent Goldsmith.

Reviews

"Heikki Seppä: Master Metalsmith"

Bainbridge Island Museum of Art, Washington
June 14, 2013–January 5, 2014

by Matthew Kangas

Among the last of the immigrant metalsmiths to come to the United States after World War II from Scandinavia, Heikki Seppä had an enduring impact. His various techniques helped expand the sculptural purview of metals. The Finnish-born artist who died at age eighty-three in 2010 was the subject of a recent survey as part of the inaugural exhibitions at the Bainbridge Island Museum of Art (BIMA), a short ferry ride from Seattle.

Seppä retired from Washington University in St. Louis as professor emeritus in 1992. He moved to Bainbridge in 1998 where he designed and built an extraordinary home and studio. Curated by the museum director, Greg Robinson, and Laurie A. Lyall, Seppä's widow, the exhibition presented thirty pieces from the estate and private collections, including several promised gifts to the museum's permanent collection. Divided into tableware, jewelry, sculptural objects and ecclesiastical accouterments, much of the show embodied Seppä's many technical breakthroughs.

After studying at the goldsmith school in Helsinki, Seppä continued his training in Copenhagen, Denmark, with the legendary Georg Jensen in 1948–49. While still in Finland, Seppä also met artisans returning from the USSR where they had worked in the reconstituted workshops of Carl Peter Fabergé, another fabled figure. They shared their knowledge of reticulated surfaces with the young silversmith. This complex technique of texturing involves alloys such as coin silver or 14k gold. Seppä used it in *Neckpiece* (1973) and *Neckpiece with Jade* (1975), for example, with rippled surfaces that also suggest other textures such as leather or flowing water.

Seppä is perhaps best known for having developed anticlastic raising whereby flat sheets of brass, stainless steel or silver can be raised into parabolic curved forms (as in teapot spouts or handles) that make the possibilities of hollowware more sculptural. In the 1960s and 1970s, this innovative technique spread throughout the metalworking community via Seppä's artist residencies at the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts in Maine and other craft centers. His book, *Form Emphasis for Metalsmiths* (Kent State University Press, 1978), which explained the process, reinforced the modernist notion that process determines content. At BIMA, numerous necklaces, bracelets, and sculptural objects exemplified the technique. *Half-Granny Knot* (1976) and *Delphinium* (1982) are wildly looping pieces that underscore his virtuosic skills. Flowing, asymmetrical lines challenged traditional orthodoxies in American silver and allowed metal objects not to be tied to the human body.

Peacock, 1982
sterling silver, peacock feathers
13 ½ x 4 ½ x 9"
PHOTO: NICK FELKEY

Neckpiece with Jade, 1975
sterling silver with reticulation, jade
1 ⅛ x 9 ¾ x 6 ¾"
PHOTO: NICK FELKEY

Iron Heart (1975), *Peacock* (1982) and *April Climax* (c. 1989) are such stand-alone objects. The anatomical heart has inset silver wire acting as blood veins and vessels. Real feathers complete *Peacock*, a highly stylized piece with an elegant, whimsical appearance, worthy of the Fabergé studio and fit for a czar. An abstracted female figure with splayed legs, *April Climax* has a quiet monumentality.

Among liturgical items on view, *Chalice and Paten* (1963) and *Ciborium and Chalice* (1964) are graceful and curved. Because large examples of Seppä's oeuvre, such as church, synagogue, and jewelry commissions were not included in "Heikki Seppä: Master Metalsmith," BIMA is currently contemplating a monograph and seeking further funding.

Matthew Kangas is a Seattle-based art critic.

"Hanna Hedman: Loss"

Ornamentum Gallery, Hudson, New York
July 6–August 5, 2013

by Andrea DiNoto

Jewelry made as an expression of sentiment is nothing new. Roman rings, with clasped hands, presumably symbolizing eternal love, have been found dating from the 2nd and 3rd centuries B.C., and the form persisted into the Middle Ages. But the notion of mourning or memorial jewelry—ornaments containing images, monograms, or actual relics, usually hair, of a deceased loved one is an even more potent concept, one that came very much into vogue during the Victorian era. Upon the death of her beloved consort, Albert, in 1861, Queen Victoria dressed only in black for the rest of her life, to commemorate her loss. For forty years, until her own death in 1901, she also accessorized with jet jewelry. Today, jewelry made from or containing cremains—ashes of a loved one—is arguably the ultimate updating of this death-centric form of accessorizing.

Against this morbid background, the Swedish jeweler Hanna Hedman presented "Loss," a collection of super-sized neckpieces and sculptural brooches. Hedman's statement of existential angst—"All around is beauty, but a lingering bleakness is pulling downward"—served as a keynote to the exhibition. Her jewelry expresses this bleakness by presenting personal loss both as an abstraction and an emotional reality via the literal weight of her pieces. Hedman herself happens to be a beauteous redhead in the fullness of youth, so you can't help but wonder how she has come to this dour worldview. She hails from the land of Ibsen and Bergman, whose darkly psychological plays and movies delve mercilessly into the bleaker realms of the Nordic soul, and perhaps that melancholy is in her DNA. If so, she has found a way to express it in a fresh and dramatic fashion. Her neckpieces are all about one's own personal intimacy with loss. They resemble dessicated floral bouquets, with small base-metal flowers, painted and powder-coated in shades of brown and black, and mounted on soft suede straps. They conform to the body and could be experienced as emanations of grief itself, not so much as jewelry but as costume elements, paradoxically dominant in form yet understated in coloration. These are not the look-at-me pieces from the 1980s, whose architectural projections turned the wearer into a self-referential performance artist. Hedman's approach, at least with the neckpieces, is totally inward, aiming, perhaps, to transform the act of wearing into a meditation.

In one neckpiece, a skull is integrated into the flowers, an evocation of still-life vanitas paintings that warned of life's impermanence. In another, a heart-shaped "pendant" of layered flowers hangs from a V-neck collar. Most impressive is a deep yoke with the weight of chain mail—the metal flowers thickly applied to the leather underlayer becoming a mournful garden sprouting from chest, back, and shoulders.

Hedman's huge brooches, in contrast, make little effort to accommodate the body. To wear them is to make a political statement, one that Hedman has espoused from the start of her fledgling career (she has been exhibiting only since 2008): a concern for threats to biodiversity. Several resemble animal life, replete with scales, feathers, and tentacles. In previous shows, Hedman has presented many more of these brooches, which she describes

Loss 6, 2013
silver, leather, copper, paint
18 x 9 ½ x 2 ½"
PHOTO: SANNA LINDBERG

Hanna Hedman
Loss 9, 2013
silver, goatskin, copper, paint
24 x 21 ¼ x 1 ⅛"
PHOTO: SANNA LINDBERG

as "images of endangered animals and plants that merge and create new life forms." (Her 2012 SOFA/Ornamentum show was titled "While They Await Extinction.") These objects are fascinating in their complexity, much like headless creatures from the deep that might have been caught in a fisherman's net and preserved for scientific observation. They are, as Hedman herself has written of the objects overall in this show, "beautiful on one hand, but on the other hand haunting and not even jewellery at all."

Andrea DiNoto writes on art, craft and design.

"Rebecca Hannon: Jolie"

Jewelers'Werk Galerie,
Washington, DC
June 22–July 19, 2013

by Katja Toporski

Rebecca Hannon's show "Jolie" at Jewelers'Werk Galerie is an engaging synthesis of work made from laminated Formica beads and experimental pieces that resulted from an artist residency on the French Polynesian island Hiva Oa. Hannon's formidable educational pedigree—with a BFA from RISD and a Diplom/MFA from the Akademie in Munich, Germany, under a Fulbright scholarship—makes her a designer sure of her visual language and artistic aims. Backed by awareness of the history of common jewelry forms, such as beads and necklaces, her goal is simplification, attempting to pry the essence of the format she works in.

A number of such necklaces and earrings are included in the show: beautiful compositions of laser-cut Formica circles strung on an invisible cable. Some have added dimensionality with a slotted assembly of the bead silhouettes, some come in a carefully selected color palette. In the majority of pieces, however, the cutout circles are flat, and the color is limited to white, with a darkened edge where the laser beam burned the material. Advancing this restrained format, Hannon extends the chain in the neckpiece *Long White* to 15 feet of white disks of varying sizes, a length that requires the assistance of another person when putting it on. This piece transcends the idea of the beaded necklace, taking it to a level reminiscent of the Indian guru covered from head to toe in prayer beads.

Hannon's latest body of work was developed during her three-month artist residency in Hiva Oa, the island that bears the graves of both Jacques Brel and Paul Gauguin. Working in an open-roofed atelier without a fully equipped jewelry studio forced her to explore simple materials such as paper and locally available tapa cloth and to use basic assembly techniques. She describes her approach to this foreign culture as difficult but found entry points in the local tradition of using large flowers as fragrant hair and body adornments and in the abstracted geometric forms of traditional warrior tattoos displayed on the men's skin. Struck by the clear gender assignment of these decorations, she decided to switch them in the work she pursued while on the island. Using the geometric shapes of the tattoos, she made arm and head coverings for women cut out of white paper, thus transforming the somewhat menacing impression of the tattoos into clean beautiful objects with an unusual purpose. She re-created white Tiaré flowers in paper and assembled them into a beardlike ornament that hooks behind a man's ears while covering his mouth. A giant paper Hibiscus flower acted as a head ornament for men, an exaggeration of the type the women used in their coiffures.

Back home in Nova Scotia, Hannon used materials more suited to jewelry to transform the pieces created on the island: the paper-flower beard was remade with porcelain paper, the huge Hibiscus appears as a porcelain ornament on a chunky silver bracelet, the head-covering design was transplanted into pierced silver earrings, and the paper armcuffs became T-shirt extensions designed on the computer and laser cut from Tyvex.

A group of simple white Formica earrings seems to blend the two bodies of work. While some earrings feature the circles of the beaded necklaces, others represent the negative space cut from the computer-designed tattoo cuffs. Both reflect the artist's search for an

Rebecca Hannon
Butterfly, 2013
carrara marble

Rebecca Hannon
Long White (neckpiece), 2013
laminate
length 15'

essence, or as Hannon calls it, a shadow of the original: a pure white memory of an age-old format of adornment. While other jewelers have explored new sites for body adornment perhaps more radically than Hannon, she has focused on the forgotten role of men in the Western jewelry world in a refreshing way. The piece that best sums up this juxtaposition of male and female traits in ornamentation is a necklace of a large butterfly cut from Carrara marble mounted on a stainless steel backing and suspended from a thick white nylon cord. While there is a delicacy to the butterfly and its white appearance, the piece is large and heavy—a burden to the wearer—yet maybe the assurance imparted by its mass also gives rise to a sensation of rootedness.

Katja Toporski is a metalsmith based in Washington, DC.

"Turkmen Jewelry from the Collection of Marshall and Marilyn R. Wolf"

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
October 9, 2012–February 24, 2013

by Rosanne Raab

An extraordinary group of crafted metalwork was given the spotlight in The Metropolitan Museum of Art's galleries of the Arab Lands, Turkey, Iran, Central Asia, and Later South Asia. Marshall and Marilyn R. Wolf recently donated to the museum more than 250 pieces of Turkmen silver jewelry and decorative objects, dating from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and forty-three of these objects were shown in the Hagop Kevorkian Special Exhibitions Gallery. Although often categorized as ethnological icons, they are appreciated today as objects of art, craft, and design.

Turkmen jewelry often embodied deep symbolic meaning. Silver jewelry, believed to ward off evil and illness, was worn by men, women, and especially children. Young women were adorned with shapes and materials thought to ensure their ability to conceive healthy children later in life. Jewelry increased in embellishment as women approached marital age, but once fertility was established, the level of feminine adornment decreased. Jewelry was a significant economlc investment and in cases of dire need, a woman might part with her jewelry in order to help her tribe survive.

The exhibition was organized according to the principal metalsmithing techniques of Teke, Yonut, and Kazakh Turkmen. Planar construction and linear designs were transferred from textile and leather-working arts to metalworks. Techniques included chasing (hammered indentation), chip carving (chiseling), and stamping that mimicked granulation. Pieces of silver sheets were soldered in boxlike constructions, and patterned wire figures were manipulated, as evident in both small-scale roundels and collar clasps and large-scale encrusted leather belts produced by metalsmiths in urban Teke workshops.

Women wore cordiforms (large heart-shaped ornaments) attached to braids or amulet holders. A prized piece in the collection, in the traditional motif of Islamic art, is a split-palmetto leaf arabesque; its surface includes niello, (a black mixture of copper, silver, and lead sulfites used as an inlay) enclosed in silver wire filigree and twisted rope.

Imagine the sound of bells and the clicking of beads when heavily decorated Turkmen women paraded through souks or traveled the Silk Road. "Turkmen appreciated strong women," states Layla Diba, author of the illustrated catalogue documenting the Wolf Collection. A floral *Pectoral Ornament* adorned with sacred rams' heads and chains of lozenge-shaped drops, and a similar pectoral ornament, six-sided and augmented with silver balls and teardrop elements, would have dominated the brightly colored silks that covered Turkmen women from head to waist, front and back. These women could be seen *and* heard. (Note: Today we encounter Nick Cave's *Soundsuits* capturing the sound of the wearers.)

Tumar, a triangular amulet holder, is the most distinctive of the Turkmen ornaments in the Wolf Collection. Amulet holders each contain the same basic features: a hollow cylinder divided into three to six compartments, usually set with carnelian. It opens at one end to allow a rolled paper inscribed with protective prayers or Qur'an verses to be inserted within. They were worn on the chest, at the sides, or on the waist. A Teke amulet in the collection features large-scale openwork, a massing of carnelian, and a swirling motif at either end of the cylinder, while a Yomut amulet holder, narrating a story of pecking birds calling for health and good fortune, is abundant with faceted stones, and polygonal pendants with alternating rosettes. In contrast, a silvery, stark Ersari amulet is decorated with geometric forms, and a Karakalpak example in the form of a pagoda echoes Chinese influence. A more whimsical charm is seen in the shape of *Pairs of Boys' Amulets* that functioned as protection against the evil eye and sickness.

Cordiform Pendant, mid-late 19th C
Central Asia; Teke
silver, fire-gilded and chased, with niello inlay, decorative wire, and table-cut carnelians
10 x 6 ⅛"
COLLECTION THE THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Pectoral Ornament, late 19th-20th C
Central Asia or Iran; Teke
silver, fire-gilded, with openwork, stamping, decorative wire, pendants with applied decoration,
wire chains with embossed pendants and bells, and table-cut carnelians
12 ¼ x 15"
COLLECTION THE THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Dorsal plait ornaments, which embellished the braided hair of married women, were constructed of vertical rows of Persian silver coins, bells, and faceted glass stones. Extremely long temple pendants, attached to headdresses, display intricately crafted openwork set with carnelians and turquoise in characteristic Teke and Kazakh style. Some plait ornaments bear a striking resemblance to Art Deco drop earrings, almost suggesting a stylistic evolution.

The Wolf Collection also includes luxury objects. A Teke silver crown is embedded with oversized carnelians in a gold and silver abstract pattern. A matched pair of whips, their handles decorated with horse heads at the end and a beautiful surface of pseudo-granulation and turquoise in Kazakh style, resemble regal scepters. Combs chased with split-leaf arabesques and deer, and bird-shaped armbands embellished with myriad small turquoise and floral roundels give further evidence of the high level of Turkmen jewelry as objects of art, craft, and design.

Rosanne Raab is a New York-based independent curator and lecturer.

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Keynote speaker for the 2014 SNAG conference, Tanya Harrod

SNAG's 2014 Conference, "From Grains to Gold"

"From Grains to Gold" is the theme of SNAG's 43rd annual conference, to be held in Minneapolis, Minnesota, April 23–26, 2014. The conference will examine the relationship between the maker and the materials at a time when materials, techniques, and processes are rapidly changing. It will also investigate the meaning of "hand-made" in the 21st century. Presenters will explore the shift in social consciousness that has emerged from the excesses and dehumanization of the global market, leading to the resurgence of people buying locally made objects and supporting their communities.

Keynote speaker, Dr. Tanya Harrod, will kick off the event with a lecture titled "Let's Print Out a Gun: Craft in the Age of Pervasive Computing." Harrod is the author of the highly recognized *Crafts in Britain in the 20th Century* (Yale University Press 1999). Her most recent book, *The Last Sane Man: Michael Cardew, Modern Pots, Colonialism and the Counterculture* (Yale University Press, 2012), just received the James Tait Black Memorial Prize for Biography. She is currently an Honorary Research Fellow at the Victoria and Albert Museum. With Glenn Adamson and Edward S. Cooke, she is an editor of *The Journal of Modern Craft*.

Other conference highlights include presentations by George Sawyer, Jenni Sorkin, Andy Cooperman, and Mirjam Hiller, among other presenters and lecturers. The American Craft Council will be a program partner for the conference, welcoming SNAG conference attendees to the Twin Cities and hosting exhibitions of Sharon Church, Rachel Timmins, and April Woods at their new headquarters in the Grainbelt Building during a Studio Crawl evening.

For more information or to register, please visit: www.snagmetalsmith.org/conferences

SNAG Welcomes New Executive Director

After an extensive national search, SNAG's Board of Directors is pleased to announce its new Executive Director, Gwynne Rukenbrod. Most recently, Rukenbrod was the Director of Sales and Marketing at Wholesalecrafts.com. She was also Executive Director of Handmade in America, an organization based in Western North Carolina devoted to developing the economy through craft. In her 2½ years at Handmade in America, she created a new strategic plan, sustainable business plan, and significantly increased new funding.

From 2008 to 2010, Gwynne was the Curator of Fine Craft at the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, a nonprofit organization founded to advance education about the process, product, and history of craft. She was also the Executive Director of the International Society of Glass Beadmakers; Art Curator for The Works (the Ohio Center for History, Art and Technology); and Director of the Short North Neighborhood Foundation. She has worked with both rural and urban communities teaching professional development and entrepreneurship workshops across the country. Gwynne believes in helping artists and nonprofits expand their markets and in creating sustainable business practices. In addition to her experience as an executive, Gwynne is also an accomplished glass artist. She will continue to work and live in Asheville, North Carolina.

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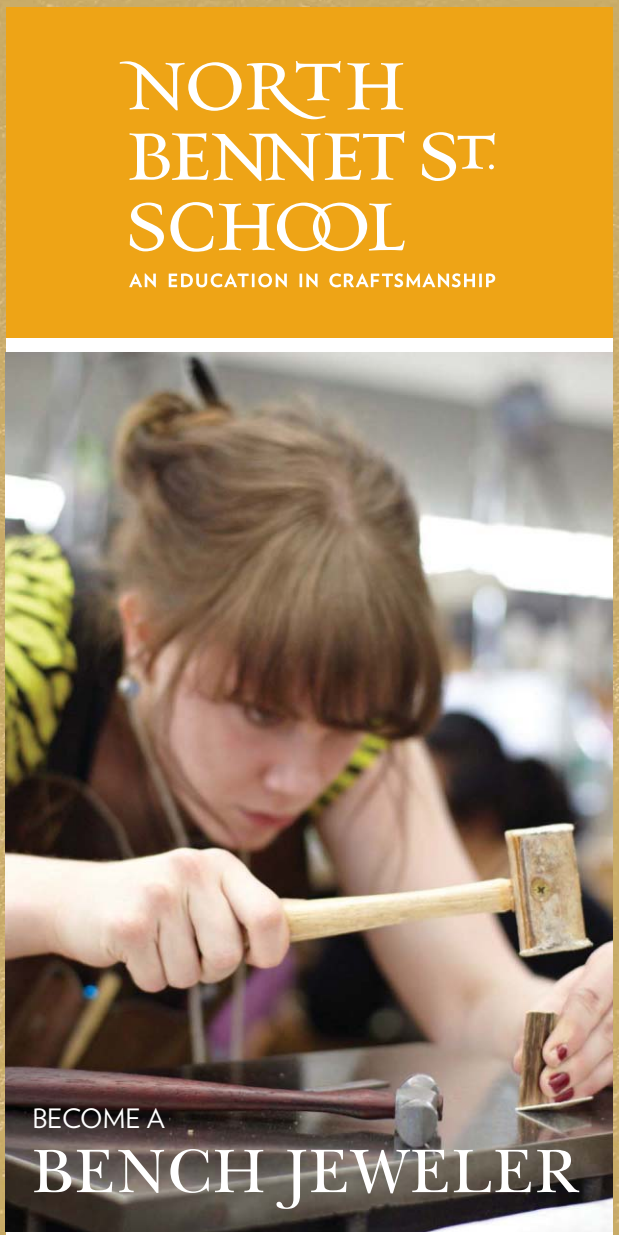
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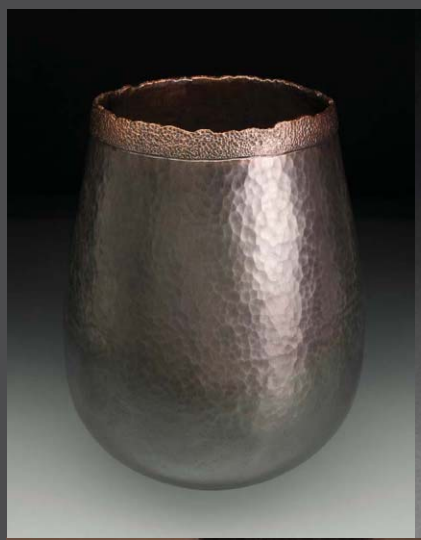
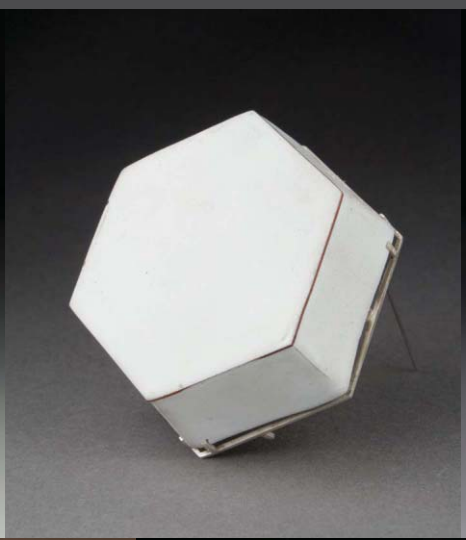

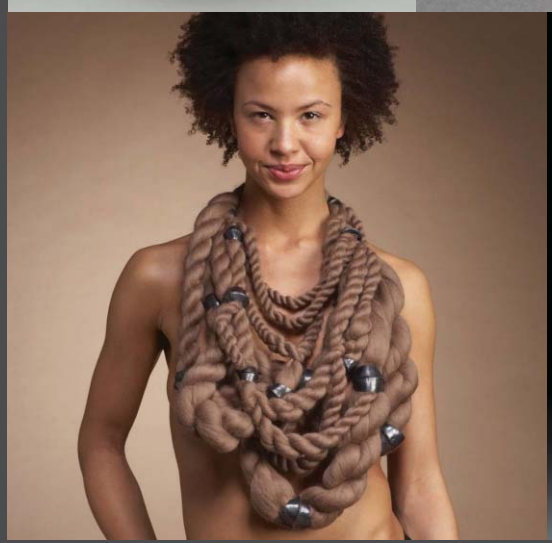
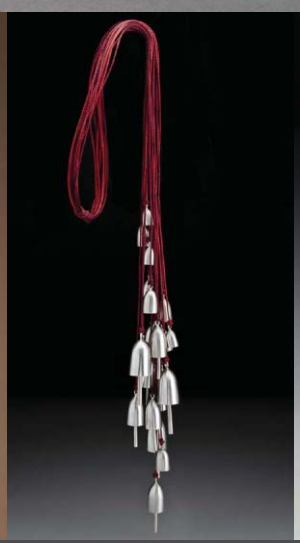

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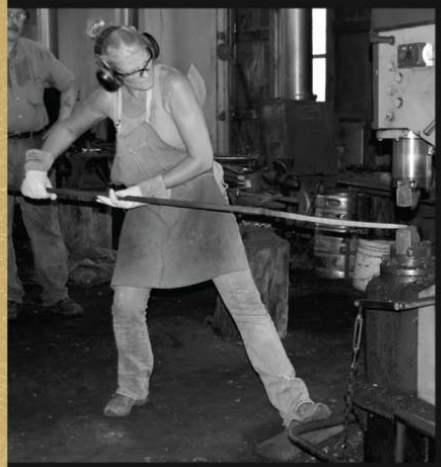

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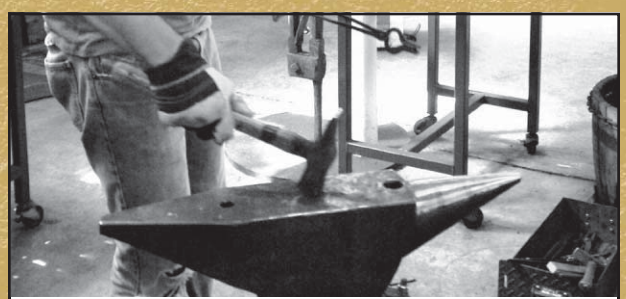

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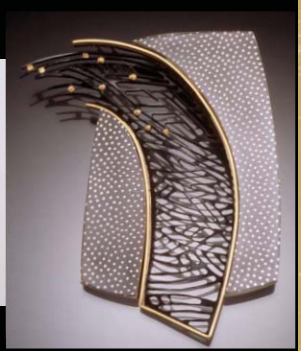

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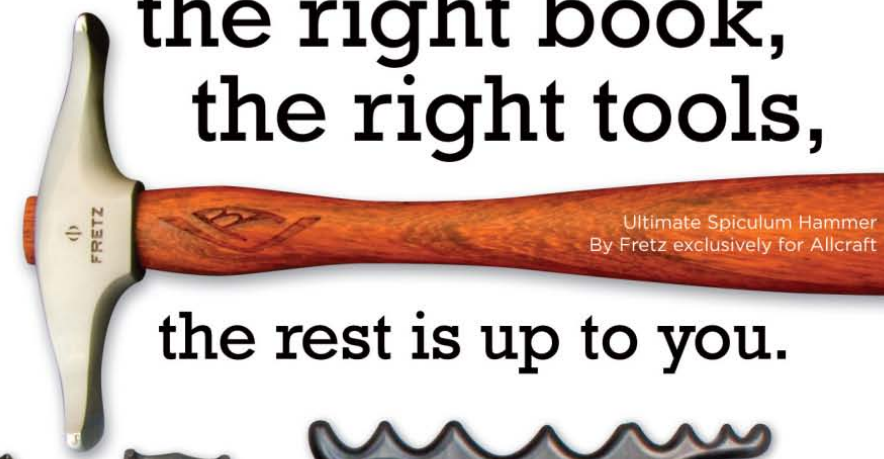

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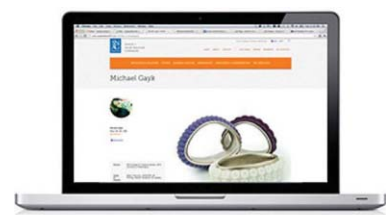

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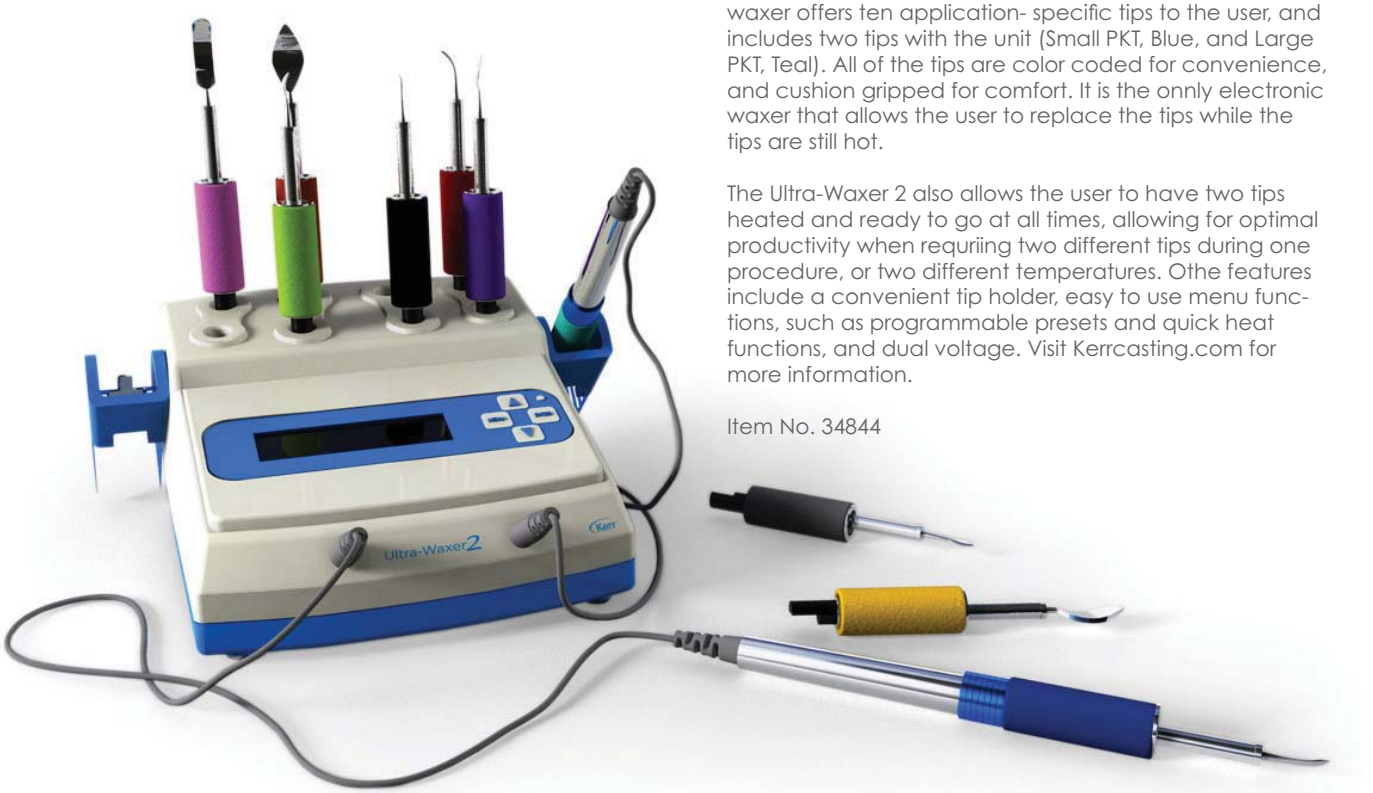

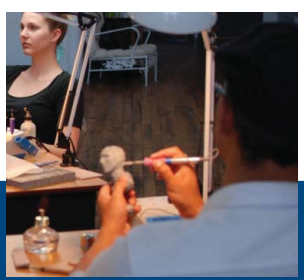

The Kerr Ultra-Waxer 2 in action at a recent Adam Beane Sculpting Portrait Workshop. The Ultra-Waxer is the instrument of choice by Adam Beane, a self-taught highly acclaimed commercial sculptor. See more about Adam Beane, his work, and his unique sculpting materials at www.adambeaneindustries.com.

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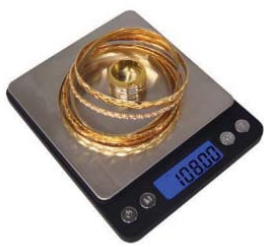

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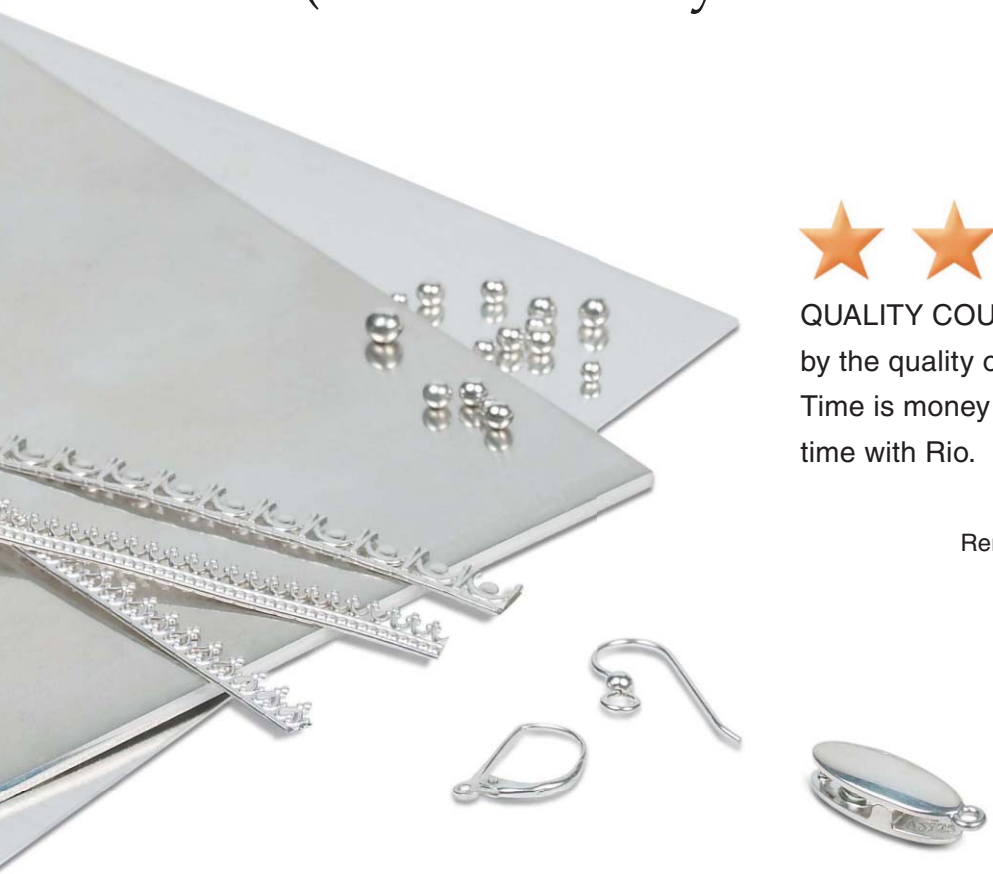

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